

POEMS

TOGETHER WITH

BROTHER JACOB AND THE LIFTED VEIL

BY

GEORGE ELIOT



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POEMS OF GEORGE ELIOT.

THE LEGEND OF JUBAL.

WHEN Cain was driven from Jehovah's land
He wandered eastward, seeking some far strand
Ruled by kind gods who asked no offerings
Save pure field-fruits, as aromatic things,
To feed the subtler sense of frames divine
That lived on fragrance for their food and wine:
Wild joyous gods, who winked at faults and folly,
And could be pitiful and melancholy.
He never had a doubt that such gods were;
He looked within, and saw them mirrored there.
Some think he came at last to Tartary,
And some to Ind; but, howsoe'er it be,
His staff he planted where sweet waters ran,
And in that home of Cain the Arts began.

Man's life was spacious in the early world:
It paused, like some slow ship with sail unfurled
Waiting in seas by scarce a wavelet curled;
Beheld the slow star-paces of the skies,
And grew from strength to strength through centuries;
Saw infant trees fill out their giant limbs,
And heard a thousand times the sweet birds' marriage hymns.

In Cain's young city none had heard of Death
Save him, the founder; and it was his faith
That here, away from harsh Jehovah's law,
Man was immortal, since no halt or flaw
In Cain's own frame betrayed six hundred years,
But dark as pines that autumn never sears
His locks thronged backward as he ran, his frame
Rose like the orbèd sun each morn the same,
Lake-mirrored to his gaze; and that red brand,
The scorching impress of Jehovah's hand,
Was still clear-edged to his unwearyed eye,
Its secret firm in time-fraught memory.
He said, "My happy offspring shall not know
That the red life from out a man may flow

When smitten by his brother." True, his race
 Bore each one stamped upon his new-born face
 A copy of the brand no whit less clear;
 But every mother held that little copy dear.

Thus generations in glad idlesse throve,
 Nor hunted prey, nor with each other strove;
 For clearest springs were plenteous in the land,
 And gourds for cups; the ripe fruits sought the hand,
 Bending the laden boughs with fragrant gold;
 And for their roofs and garments wealth untold
 Lay everywhere in grasses and broad leaves:
 They labored gently, as a maid who weaves
 Her hair in mimic mats, and pauses oft
 And strokes across her palm the tresses soft,
 Then peeps to watch the poisèd butterfly,
 Or little burdened ants that homeward hie.
 Time was but leisure to their lingering thought,
 There was no need for haste to finish aught;
 But sweet beginnings were repeated still
 Like infant babblings that no task fulfil;
 For love, that loved not change, constrained the simple will.

Till, hurling stones in mere athletic joy,
 Strong Lamech struck and killed his fairest boy,
 And tried to wake him with the tenderest cries,
 And fetched and held before the glazed eyes
 The things they best had loved to look upon;
 But never glance or smile or sigh he won.
 The generations stood around those twain
 Helplessly gazing, till their father Cain
 Parted the press, and said, "He will not wake;
 This is the endless sleep, and we must make
 A bed deep down for him beneath the sod;
 For know, my sons, there is a mighty God
 Angry with all man's race, but most with me.
 I fled from out His land in vain!—'tis He
 Who came and slew the lad, for He has found
 This home of ours, and we shall all be bound
 By the harsh bands of His most cruel will,
 Which any moment may some dear one kill.
 Nay, though we live for countless moons, at last
 We and all ours shall die like summers past.
 This is Jehovah's will, and He is strong;
 I thought the way I travelled was too long
 For Him to follow me: my thought was vain!
 He walks unseen, but leaves a track of pain,
 Pale Death His footprint is, and He will come again!"

And a new spirit from that hour came o'er
 The race of Cain: soft idlesse was no more,
 But even the sunshine had a heart of care,
 Smiling with hidden dread—a mother fair
 Who folding to her breast a dying child
 Beams with feigned joy that but makes sadness mild.
 Death was now lord of Life, and at his word
 Time, vague as air before, new terrors stirred,

With measured wing now audibly arose
 Throbbing through all things to some unknown close.
 Now glad Content by clutching Haste was torn,
 And Work grew eager, and Device was born.
 It seemed the light was never loved before,
 Now each man said, "'Twill go and come no more."
 No budding branch, no pebble from the brook,
 No form, no shadow, but new dearness took
 From the one thought that life must have an end;
 And the last parting now began to send
 Diffusive dread through love and wedded bliss,
 Thrilling them into finer tenderness.
 Then Memory disclosed her face divine,
 That like the calm nocturnal lights doth shine
 Within the soul, and shows the sacred graves,
 And shows the presence that no sunlight craves,
 No space, no warmth, but moves among them all;
 Gone and yet here, and coming at each call,
 With ready voice and eyes that understand,
 And lips that ask a kiss, and dear responsive hand.

Thus to Cain's race death was tear-watered seed
 Of various life and action-shaping need.
 But chief the sons of Lamech felt the stings
 Of new ambition, and the force that springs
 In passion beating on the shores of fate.
 They said, "There comes a night when all too late
 The mind shall long to prompt the achieving hand,
 The eager thought behind closed portals stand,
 And the last wishes to the mute lips press
 Buried ere death in silent helplessness.
 Then while the soul its way with sound can cleave,
 And while the arm is strong to strike and heave,
 Let soul and arm give shape that will abide
 And rule above our graves, and power divide
 With that great god of day, whose rays must bend
 As we shall make the moving shadows tend.
 Come, let us fashion acts that are to be,
 When we shall lie in darkness silently,
 As our young brother doth, whom yet we see
 Fallen and slain, but reigning in our will
 By that one image of him pale and still."
 For Lamech's sons were heroes of their race:
 Jabal, the eldest, bore upon his face
 The look of that calm river-god, the Nile,
 Mildly secure in power that needs not guile.
 But Tubal-Cain was restless as the fire
 That glows and spreads and leaps from high to higher
 Where'er is aught to seize or to subdue;
 Strong as a storm he lifted or o'erthrew,
 His urgent limbs like rounded granite grew,
 Such granite as the plunging torrent wears
 And roaring rolls around through countless years.
 But strength that still on movement must be fed,
 Inspiring thought of change, devices bred,
 And urged his mind through earth and air to rove
 For force that he could conquer if he strove,

For lurking forms that might new tasks fulfil
And yield unwilling to his stronger will.
Such Tubal-Cain. But Jubal had a frame
Fashioned to finer senses, which became
A yearning for some hidden soul of things,
Some outward touch complete on inner springs
That vaguely moving bred a lonely pain,
A want that did but stronger grow with gain
Of all good else, as spirits might be sad
For lack of speech to tell us they are glad.

Now Jabal learned to tame the lowing kine,
And from their udders drew the snow-white wine
That stirs the innocent joy, and makes the stream
Of elemental life with fulness teem;
The star-browed calves he nursed with feeding hand,
And sheltered them, till all the little band
Stood mustered gazing at the sunset way
Whence he would come with store at close of day.
He soothed the silly sheep with friendly tone
And reared their staggering lambs that, older grown,
Followed his steps with sense-taught memory;
Till he, their shepherd, could their leader be
And guide them through the pastures as he would,
With sway that grew from ministry of good.
He spread his tents upon the grassy plain
Which, eastward widening like the open main,
Showed the first whiteness 'neath the morning star;
Near him his sister, deft, as women are,
Plied her quick skill in sequence to his thought
Till the hid treasures of the milk she caught
Revealed like pollen 'mid the petals white,
The golden pollen, virgin to the light.
Even the she-wolf with young, on rapine bent,
He caught and tethered in his mat-walled tent,
And cherished all her little sharp-nosed young
Till the small race with hope and terror clung
About his footsteps, till each new-reared brood,
Remoter from the memories of the wood,
More glad discerned their common home with man.
This was the work of Jabal: he began
The pastoral life, and, sire of joys to be,
Spread the sweet ties that bind the family
O'er dear dumb souls that thrilled at man's caress,
And shared his pains with patient helpfulness.

But Tubal-Cain had caught and yoked the fire,
Yoked it with stones that bent the flaming spire
And made it roar in prisoned servitude
Within the furnace, till with force subdued
It changed all forms he willed to work upon,
Till hard from soft, and soft from hard, he won.
The pliant clay he moulded as he would,
And laughed with joy when 'mid the heat it stood
Shaped as his hand had chosen, while the mass
That from his hold, dark, obstinate, would pass,

He drew all glowing from the busy heat,
All breathing as with life that he could beat
With thundering hammer, making it obey
His will creative, like the pale soft clay.
Each day he wrought and better than he planned,
Shape breeding shape beneath his restless hand.
(The soul without still helps the soul within,
And its deft magic ends what we begin.)
Nay, in his dreams his hammer he would wield
And seem to see a myriad types revealed,
Then spring with wondering triumphant cry,
And, lest the inspiring vision should go by,
Would rush to labor with that plastic zeal
Which all the passion of our life can steal
For force to work with. Each day saw the birth
Of various forms which, flung upon the earth,
Seemed harmless toys to cheat the exacting hour,
But were as seeds instinct with hidden power.
The axe, the club, the spiked wheel, the chain,
Held silently the shrieks and moans of pain;
And near them latent lay in share and spade,
In the strong bar, the saw, and deep-curved blade,
Glad voices of the hearth and harvest-home,
The social good, and all earth's joy to come.
Thus to mixed ends wrought Tubal; and they say,
Some things he made have lasted to this day;
As, thirty silver pieces that were found
By Noah's children buried in the ground.
He made them from mere hunger of device,
Those small white disks; but they became the price
The traitor Judas sold his Master for;
And men still handling them in peace and war
Catch foul disease, that comes as appetite,
And lurks and clings as withering, damning blight.
But Tubal-Cain wot not of treachery,
Nor greedy lust, nor any ill to be,
Save the one ill of sinking into nought,
Banished from action and act-shaping thought.
He was the sire of swift-transforming skill,
Which arms for conquest man's ambitious will;
And round him gladly, as his hammer rung,
Gathered the elders and the growing young:
These handled vaguely and those plied the tools,
Till, happy chance begetting conscious rules,
The home of Cain with industry was rife,
And glimpses of a strong persistent life,
Panting through generations as one breath,
And filling with its soul the blank of death.

Jubal, too, watched the hammer, till his eyes,
No longer following its fall or rise,
Seemed glad with something that they could not see,
But only listened to—some melody,
Wherein dumb longings inward speech had found,
Won from the common store of struggling sound.
Then, as the metal shapes more various grew,
And, hurled upon each other, resonance drew,

Each gave new tones, the revelations dim
 Of some external soul that spoke for him:
 The hollow vessel's clang, the clash, the boom,
 Like light that makes wide spiritual room
 And skyey spaces in the spaceless thought,
 To Jubal such enlargèd passion brought
 That love, hope, rage, and all experience,
 Were fused in vaster being, fetching thence
 Concords and discords, cadences and cries
 That seemed from some world-shrouded soul to rise,
 Some rapture more intense, some mightier rage,
 Some living sea that burst the bounds of man's brief age.

Then with such blissful trouble and glad care
 For growth within unborn as mothers bear,
 To the far woods he wandered, listening,
 And heard the birds their little stories sing
 In notes whose rise and fall seemed melted speech—
 Melted with tears, smiles, glances—that can reach
 More quickly through our frame's deep-winding night,
 And without thought raise thought's best fruit, delight.
 Pondering, he sought his home again and heard
 The fluctuant changes of the spoken word:
 The deep remonstrance and the argued want,
 Insistent first in close monotonous chant,
 Next leaping upward to defiant stand
 Or downward beating like the resolute hand;
 The mother's call, the children's answering cry,
 The laugh's light cataract tumbling from on high;
 The suasive repetitions Jabal taught,
 That timid browsing cattle homeward brought;
 The clear-winged fugue of echoes vanishing;
 And through them all the hammer's rhythmic ring.
 Jubal sat lonely, all around was dim,
 Yet his face glowed with light revealed to him:
 For as the delicate stream of odor wakes
 The thought-wed sentience and some image makes
 From out the mingled fragments of the past,
 Finely compact in wholeness that will last,
 So streamed as from the body of each sound
 Subtler pulsations, swift as warmth, which found
 All prisoned germs and all their powers unbound,
 Till thought self-luminous flamed from memory,
 And in creative vision wandered free.
 Then Jubal, standing, rapturous arms upraised,
 And on the dark with eager eyes he gazed,
 As had some manifested god been there.
 It was his thought he saw: the presence fair
 Of unachieved achievement, the high task,
 The struggling unborn spirit that doth ask
 With irresistible cry for blood and breath,
 Till feeding its great life we sink in death:

He said, "Were now those mighty tones and cries
 That from the giant soul of earth arise,
 Those groans of some great travail heard from far,
 Some power at wrestle with the things that are,

Those sounds which vary with the varying form
Of clay and metal, and in sightless swarm
Fill the wide space with tremors: were these wed
To human voices with such passion fed
As does but glimmer in our common speech,
But might flame out in tones whose changing reach,
Surpassing meagre need, informs the sense
With fuller union, finer difference—
Were this great vision, now obscurely bright
As morning hills that melt in new-poured light,
Wrought into solid form and living sound,
Moving with ordered throb and sure rebound,
Then— Nay, I, Jubal, will that work begin!
The generations of our race shall win
New life, that grows from out the heart of this,
As spring from winter, or as lovers' bliss
From out the dull unknown of unwaked energies."

Thus he resolved, and in the soul-fed light
Of coming ages waited through the night,
Watching for that near dawn whose chiller ray
Showed but the unchanged world of yesterday;
Where all the order of his dream divine
Lay like Olympian forms within the mine;
Where fervor that could fill the earthly round
With thronged joys of form-begotten sound
Must shrink intense within the patient power
That lonely labors through the niggard hour.
Such patience have the heroes who begin,
Sailing the first to lands which others win.
Jubal must dare as great beginners dare,
Strike form's first way in matter rude and bare,
And, yearning vaguely toward the plenteous quire
Of the world's harvest, make one poor small lyre.
He made it, and from out its measured frame
Drew the harmonic soul, whose answers came
With guidance sweet and lessons of delight
Teaching to ear and hand the blissful Right,
Where strictest law is gladness to the sense
And all desire bends toward obedience.

Then Jubal poured his triumph in a song—
The rapturous word that rapturous notes prolong
As radiance streams from smallest things that burn,
Or thought of loving into love doth turn.
And still his lyre gave companionship
In sense-taught concert as of lip with lip.
Alone amid the hills at first he tried
His winged song; then with adoring pride
And bridegroom's joy at leading forth his bride,
He said, "This wonder which my soul hath found,
This heart of music in the might of sound,
Shall forthwith be the share of all our race
And like the morning gladden common space:
The song shall spread and swell as rivers do,
And I will teach our youth with skill to woo

This living lyre, to know its secret will,
 Its fine division of the good and ill.
 So shall men call me sire of harmony,
 And where great Song is, there my life shall be."

Thus glorying as a god beneficent,
 Forth from his solitary joy he went
 To bless mankind. It was at evening,
 When shadows lengthen from each westward thing,
 When imminence of change makes sense more fine
 And light seems holier in its grand decline.
 The fruit-trees wore their studded coronal,
 Earth and her children were at festival,
 Glowing as with one heart and one consent—
 Thought, love, trees, rocks, in sweet warm radiance blent.

The tribe of Cain was resting on the ground,
 The various ages wreathed in one broad round.
 Here lay, while children peeped o'er his huge thighs,
 The sinewy man embrowned by centuries;
 Here the broad-bosomed mother of the strong
 Looked, like Demeter, placid o'er the throng
 Of young lithe forms whose rest was movement too—
 Tricks, prattle, nods, and laughs that lightly flew,
 And swayings as of flower-beds where Love blew.
 For all had feasted well upon the flesh
 Of juicy fruits, on nuts, and honey fresh,
 And now their wine was health-bred merriment,
 Which through the generations circling went.
 Leaving none sad, for even father Cain
 Smiled as a Titan might, despising pain.
 Jabal sat climbed on by a playful ring
 Of children, lambs and whelps, whose gambolling,
 With tiny hoofs, paws, hands, and dimpled feet,
 Made barks, bleats, laughs, in pretty hubbub meet.
 But Tubal's hammer rang from far away,
 Tubal alone would keep no holiday,
 His furnace must not slack for any feast,
 For of all hardship work he counted least;
 He scorned all rest but sleep, where every dream
 Made his repose more potent action seem.

Yet with health's nectar some strange thirst was blent,
 The fateful growth, the unnamed discontent,
 The inward shaping toward some unborn power,
 Some deeper-breathing act, the being's flower.
 After all gestures, words, and speech of eyes,
 The soul had more to tell, and broke in sighs.
 Then from the east, with glory on his head
 Such as low-slanting beams on corn-waves spread,
 Came Jubal with his lyre: there 'mid the throng,
 Where the blank space was, poured a solemn song,
 Touching his lyre to full harmonic throb
 And measured pulse, with cadences that sob,
 Exult and cry, and search the inmost deep
 Where the dark sources of new passion sleep.

Joy took the air, and took each breathing soul,
 Embracing them in one entranced whole,
 Yet thrilled each varying frame to various ends,
 As Spring new-waking through the creature sends
 Or rage or tenderness; more plenteous life
 Here breeding dread, and there a fiercer strife.
 He who had lived through twice three centuries,
 Whose mouths monotonous, like trees on trees
 In hoary forests, stretched a backward maze,
 Dreamed himself dimly through the travelled days
 Till in clear light he paused, and felt the sun
 That warmed him when he was a little one;
 Felt that true heaven, the recovered past,
 The dear small Known amid the Unknown vast,
 And in that heaven wept. But younger limbs
 Thrilled toward the future, that bright land which swims
 In western glory, isles and streams and bays,
 Where hidden pleasures float in golden haze.
 And in all these the rhythmic influence,
 Sweetly o'ercharging the delighted sense,
 Flowed out in movements, little waves that spread
 Enlarging, till in tidal union led
 The youths and maidens both alike long-tressed,
 By grace-inspiring melody possessed,
 Rose in slow dance, with beauteous floating swerve
 Of limbs and hair, and many a melting curve
 Of ringed feet swayed by each close-linked palm:
 Then Jubal poured more rapture in his psalm,
 The dance fired music, music fired the dance,
 The glow diffusive lit each countenance,
 Till all the gazing elders rose and stood
 With glad yet awful shock of that mysterious good.

Even Tubal caught the sound, and wondering came,
 Urging his sooty bulk like smoke-wrapt flame
 Till he could see his brother with the lyre,
 The work for which he lent his furnace-fire
 And diligent hammer, witting nought of this—
 This power in metal shape which made strange bliss,
 Entering within him like a dream full-fraught
 With new creations finished in a thought.

The sun had sunk, but music still was there,
 And when this ceased, still triumph filled the air:
 It seemed the stars were shining with delight
 And that no night was ever like this night.
 All clung with praise to Jubal: some besought
 That he would teach them his new skill; some caught,
 Swiftly as smiles are caught in looks that meet,
 The tone's melodic change and rhythmic beat:
 'Twas easy following where invention trod—
 All eyes can see when light flows out from God.

And thus did Jubal to his race reveal
 Music their larger soul, where woe and weal
 Filling the resonant chords, the song, the dance,
 Moved with a wider-winged utterance.

Now many a lyre was fashioned, many a song
 Raised echoes new, old echoes to prolong,
 Till things of Jubal's making were so rife,
 "Hearing myself," he said, "hems in my life,
 And I will get me to some far-off land,
 Where higher mountains under heaven stand
 And touch the blue at rising of the stars,
 Whose song they hear where no rough mingling mars
 The great clear voices. Such lands there must be,
 Where varying forms make varying symphony—
 Where other thunders roll amid the hills,
 Some mightier wind a mightier forest fills
 With other strains through other-shapen boughs:
 Where bees and birds and beasts that hunt or browse
 Will teach me songs I know not. Listening there,
 My life shall grow like trees both tall and fair
 That rise and spread and bloom toward fuller fruit each year."

He took a raft, and travelled with the stream
 Southward for many a league, till he might deem
 He saw at last the pillars of the sky,
 Beholding mountains whose white majesty
 Rushed through him as new awe, and made new song
 That swept with fuller wave the chords along,
 Weighting his voice with deep religious chime,
 The iteration of slow chant sublime.
 It was the region long inhabited
 By all the race of Seth; and Jubal said:
 "Here have I found my thirsty soul's desire,
 Eastward the hills touch heaven, and evening's fire
 Flames through deep waters; I will take my rest,
 And feed anew from my great mother's breast,
 The sky-clasped Earth, whose voices nurture me
 As the flowers' sweetness doth the honey-bee."
 He lingered wandering for many an age,
 And, sowing music, made high heritage
 For generations far beyond the Flood—
 For the poor late-begotten human brood
 Born to life's weary brevity and perilous good.

And ever as he travelled he would climb
 The farthest mountain, yet the heavenly chime,
 The mighty tolling of the far-off spheres
 Beating their pathway, never touched his ears.
 But wheresoe'er he rose the heavens rose,
 And the far-gazing mountain could disclose
 Nought but a wider earth; until one height
 Showed him the ocean stretched in liquid light,
 And he could hear its multitudinous roar,
 Its plunge and hiss upon the pebbled shore:
 Then Jubal silent sat, and touched his lyre no more.

He thought, "The world is great, but I am weak,
 And where the sky bends is no solid peak
 To give me footing, but instead, this main—
 Myriads of maddened horses thundering o'er the plain.

"New voices come to me where'er I roam,
 My heart too widens with its widening home:
 But song grows weaker, and the heart must break
 For lack of voice, or fingers that can wake
 The lyre's full answer; nay, its chords were all
 Too few to meet the growing spirit's call.
 The former songs seem little, yet no more
 Can soul, hand, voice, with interchanging lore
 Tell what the earth is saying unto me:
 The secret is too great; I hear confusedly.

"No farther will I travel: once again
 My brethren I will see, and that fair plain
 Where I and Song were born. There fresh-voiced youth
 Will pour my strains with all the early truth
 Which now abides not in my voice and hands,
 But only in the soul, the will that stands
 Helpless to move. My tribe remembering
 Will cry 'Tis he!' and run to greet me, welcoming."

The way was weary. Many a date-palm grew,
 And shook out clustered gold against the blue,
 While Jubal, guided by the steadfast spheres,
 Sought the dear home of those first eager years,
 When, with fresh vision fed, the fuller will
 Took living outward shape in pliant skill;
 For still he hoped to find the former things,
 And the warm gladness recognition brings.
 His footsteps erred among the mazy woods
 And long illusive sameness of the floods,
 Winding and wandering. Through far regions, strange
 With Gentile homes and faces, did he range,
 And left his music in their memory,
 And left at last, when nought besides would free
 His homeward steps from clinging hands and cries,
 The ancient lyre. And now in ignorant eyes
 No sign remained of Jubal, Lamech's son,
 That mortal frame wherein was first begun
 The immortal life of song. His withered brow
 Pressed over eyes that held no lightning now,
 His locks streamed whiteness on the hurrying air,
 The unresting soul had worn itself quite bare
 Of beauteous token, as the outworn might
 Of oaks slow dying, gaunt in summer's light.
 His full deep voice toward thinnest treble ran:
 He was the rune-writ story of a man.

And so at last he neared the well-known land,
 Could see the hills in ancient order stand
 With friendly faces whose familiar gaze
 Looked through the sunshine of his childish days;
 Knew the deep-shadowed folds of hanging woods,
 And seemed to see the self-same insect broods
 Whirling and quivering o'er the flowers—to hear
 The self-same cuckoo making distance near.
 Yea, the dear Earth, with mother's constancy,
 Met and embraced him, and said, "Thou art he!"

This was thy cradle, here my breast was thine,
Where feeding, thou didst all thy life entwine
With my sky-wedded life in heritage divine."

But wending ever through the watered plain,
Firm not to rest save in the home of Cain,
He saw dread Change, with dubious face and cold
That never kept a welcome for the old,
Like some strange heir upon the hearth, arise
Saying "This home is mine." He thought his eyes
Mocked all deep memories, as things new made,
Usurping sense, make old things shrink and fade
And seem ashamed to meet the staring day.
His memory saw a small foot-trodden way,
His eyes a broad far-stretching paven road
Bordered with many a tomb and fair abode;
The little city that once nestled low
As buzzing groups about some central glow,
Spread like a murmuring crowd o'er plain and steep,
Or monster huge in heavy-breathing sleep.
His heart grew faint, and tremblingly he sank
Close by the wayside on a weed-grown bank,
Not far from where a new-raised temple stood,
Sky-roofed, and fragrant with wrought cedar wood.
The morning sun was high; his rays fell hot
On this hap-chosen, dusty, common spot,
On the dry-withered grass and withered man:
That wondrous frame where melody began
Lay as a tomb defaced that no eye cared to scan.

But while he sank far music reached his ear.
He listened until wonder silenced fear
And gladness wonder; for the broadening stream!
Of sound advancing was his early dream,
Brought like fulfilment of forgotten prayer;
As if his soul, breathed out upon the air,
Had held the invisible seeds of harmony
Quick with the various strains of life to be.
He listened: the sweet mingled difference
With charm alternate took the meeting sense;
Then bursting like some shield-broad lily red,
Sudden and near the trumpet's notes out-spread,
And soon his eyes could see the metal flower,
Shining upturned, out on the morning pour
Its incense audible; could see a train
From out the street slow-winding on the plain
With lyres and cymbals, flutes and psalteries,
While men, youths, maids, in concert sang to these
With various throat, or in succession poured,
Or in full volume mingled. But one word
Ruled each recurrent rise and answering fall,
As when the multitudes adoring call
On some great name divine, their common soul,
The common need, love, joy, that knits them in one whole.

The word was "Jubal!" . . . "Jubal" filled the air
And seemed to ride aloft, a spirit there,

Creator of the quire, the full-fraught strain
 That grateful rolled itself to him again.
 The aged man adust upon the bank—
 Whom no eye saw—at first with rapture drank
 The bliss of music, then, with swelling heart,
 Felt, this was his own being's greater part,
 The universal joy once born in him.
 But when the train, with living face and limb
 And vocal breath, came nearer and more near,
 The longing grew that they should hold him dear;
 Him, Lamech's son, whom all their fathers knew,
 The breathing Jubal—him, to whom their love was due.
 All was forgotten but the burning need
 To claim his fuller self, to claim the deed
 That lived away from him, and grew apart,
 While he as from a tomb, with lonely heart,
 Warmed by no meeting glance, no hand that pressed,
 Lay chill amid the life his life had blessed.
 What though his song should spread from man's small race,
 Out through the myriad worlds that people space
 And make the heavens one joy-diffusing quire?—
 Still 'mid that vast would throb the keen desire
 Of this poor aged flesh, this eventide,
 This twilight soon in darkness to subside,
 This little pulse of self that, having glowed
 Through thrice three centuries, and divinely strowed
 The light of music through the vague of sound,
 Ached with its smallness still in good that had no bound.

For no eye saw him, while with loving pride
 Each voice with each in praise of Jubal vied.
 Must he in conscious trance, dumb, helpless lie
 While all that ardent kindred passed him by?
 His flesh cried out to live with living men
 And join that soul which to the inward ken
 Of all the hymning train was present there.
 Strong passion's daring sees not aught to dare:
 The frost-locked starkness of his frame low-bent,
 His voice's penury of tones long spent,
 He felt not; all his being leaped in flame
 To meet his kindred as they onward came
 Slackening and wheeling toward the temple's face:
 He rushed before them to the glittering space,
 And, with a strength that was but strong desire,
 Cried, "I am Jubal, I! . . . I made the lyre!"

The tones amid a lake of silence fell
 Broken and strained, as if a feeble bell
 Had tuneless pealed the triumph of a land
 To listening crowds in expectation spanned.
 Sudden came showers of laughter on that lake;
 They spread along the train from front to wake
 In one great storm of merriment, while he
 Shrank doubting whether he could Jubal be,
 And not a dream of Jubal, whose rich vein
 Of passionate music came with that dream-pain

Wherein the sense slips off from each loved thing
 And all appearance is mere vanishing.
 But ere the laughter died from out the rear,
 Anger in front saw profanation near;
 Jubal was but a name in each man's faith
 For glorious power untouched by that slow death
 Which creeps with creeping time; this too, the spot
 And this the day, it must be crime to blot,
 Even with scoffing at a madman's lie:
 Jubal was not a name to wed with mockery.

Two rushed upon him: two, the most devout
 In honor of great Jubal, thrust him out,
 And beat him with their flutes. 'Twas little need;
 He strove not, cried not, but with tottering speed,
 As if the scorn and howls were driving wind
 That urged his body, serving so the mind
 Which could but shrink and yearn, he sought the scree
 Of thorny thickets, and there fell unseen.
 The immortal name of Jubal filled the sky,
 While Jubal lonely laid him down to die.
 He said within his soul, "This is the end:
 O'er all the earth to where the heavens bend
 And hem men's travel, I have breathed my soul:
 I lie here now the remnant of that whole,
 The embers of a life, a lonely pain;
 As far-off rivers to my thirst were vain,
 So of my mighty years nought comes to me again.

"Is the day sinking? Softest coolness springs
 From something round me: dewy shadowy wings
 Enclose me all around—no, not above—
 Is moonlight there? I see a face of love,
 Fair as sweet music when my heart was strong:
 Yea—art thou come again to me, great Song?"

The face bent over him like silver night
 In long-remembered summers; that calm light
 Of days which shine in firmaments of thought,
 That past unchangeable, from change still wrought,
 And gentlest tones were with the vision blent:
 He knew not if that gaze the music sent,
 Or music that calm gaze: to hear, to see,
 Was but one undivided ecstasy:
 The raptured senses melted into one,
 And parting life a moment's freedom won
 From in and outer, as a little child
 Sits on a bank and sees blue heavens mild
 Down in the water, and forgets its limbs,
 And knoweth nought save the blue heaven that swims.

"Jubal," the face said, "I am thy loved Past,
 The soul that makes thee one from first to last.
 I am the angel of thy life and death,
 Thy outbreathed being drawing its last breath.
 Am I not thine alone, a dear dead bride
 Who blest thy lot above all men's beside?

Thy bride whom thou wouldst never change, nor take
 Any bride living, for that dead one's sake?
 Was I not all thy yearning and delight,
 Thy chosen search, thy senses' beauteous Right,
 Which still had been the hunger of thy frame
 In central heaven, hadst thou been still the same?
 Wouldst thou have asked aught else from any god—
 Whether with gleaming feet on earth he trod
 Or thundered through the skies—ought else for share
 Of mortal good, than in thy soul to bear
 The growth of song, and feel the sweet unrest
 Of the world's spring-tide in thy conscious breast!
 No, thou hadst grasped thy lot with all its pain,
 Nor loosed it any painless lot to gain
 Where music's voice was silent; for thy fate
 Was human music's self incorporate:
 Thy senses' keenness and thy passionate strife
 Were flesh of *her* flesh and her womb of life.
 And greatly hast thou lived, for not alone
 With hidden raptures were her secrets shown,
 Buried within thee, as the purple light
 Of gems may sleep in solitary night;
 But thy expanding joy was still to give,
 And with the generous air in song to live,
 Feeding the wave of ever-widening bliss
 Where fellowship means equal perfectness.
 And on the mountains in thy wandering
 Thy feet were beautiful as blossomed spring,
 That turns the leafless wood to love's glad home,
 For with thy coming Melody was come.
 This was thy lot, to feel, create, bestow,
 And that immeasurable life to know
 From which the fleshly self falls shrivelled, dead,
 A seed primeval that has forests bred.
 It is the glory of the heritage
 Thy life has left, that makes thy outcast age:
 Thy limbs shall lie dark, tombless on this sod,
 Because thou shinest in man's soul, a god,
 Who found and gave new passion and new joy
 That nought but Earth's destruction can destroy,
 Thy gifts to give was thine of men alone:
 'Twas but in giving that thou couldst atone
 For too much wealth amid their poverty."

The words seemed melting into symphony,
 The wings upbore him, and the gazing song
 Was floating him the heavenly space along,
 Where mighty harmonies all gently fell
 Through veiling vastness, like the far-off bell,
 Till, ever onward through the choral blue,
 He heard more faintly and more faintly knew,
 Quitting mortality, a quenched sun-wave,
 The All-creating Presence for his grave.

AGATHA.

Come with me to the mountain, not where rocks
Soar harsh above the troops of hurrying pines,
But where the earth spreads soft and rounded breast
To feed her children; where the generous hills
Lift a green isle betwixt the sky and plain
To keep some Old World things aloof from change.
Here too 'tis hill and hollow: new-born streams
With sweet enforcement, joyously compelled
Like laughing children, hurry down the steep,
And make a dimpled chase athwart the stones;
Pine woods are black upon the heights, the slopes
Are green with pasture, and the bearded corn
Fringes the blue above the sudden ridge:
A little world whose round horizon cuts
This isle of hills with heaven for a sea,
Save in clear moments when southwestward gleams
France by the Rhine, melting anon to haze.
The monks of old chose here their still retreat,
And called it by the Blessed Virgin's name,
Sancta Maria, which the peasant's tongue,
Speaking from out the parent's heart that turns
All loved things into little things, has made
Sanct Märgen—Holy little Mary, dear
As all the sweet home things she smiles upon,
The children and the cows, the apple-trees,
The cart, the plough, all named with that caress
Which feigns them little, easy to be held,
Familiar to the eyes and hand and heart.
What though a Queen? She puts her crown away
And with her little Boy wears common clothes,
Caring for common wants, remembering
That day when good Saint Joseph left his work
To marry her with humble trust sublime.
The monks are gone, their shadows fall no more
Tall-frocked and cowed athwart the evening field
At milking-time; their silent corridors
Are turned to homes of bare-armed, aproned men,
Who toil for wife and children. But the bells,
Pealing on high from two quaint convent towers,
Still ring the Catholic signals, summoning
To grave remembrance of the larger life
That bears our own, like perishable fruit
Upon its heaven-wide branches. At their sound
The shepherd boy far off upon the hill,
The workers with the saw and at the forge,
The triple generation round the hearth -

Grandames and mothers and the flute-voiced girls—
 Fall on their knees and send forth prayerful cries
 To the kind Mother with the little Boy,
 Who pleads for helpless men against the storm,
 Lightning and plagues all and terrific shapes
 Of power supreme.
 Within the prettiest hollow of these hills,
 Just as you enter it, upon the slope
 Stands a low cottage neighbored cheerily
 By running water, which, at farthest end
 Of the same hollow, turns a heavy mill,
 And feeds the pasture for the miller's cows,
 Bianchi and Nägeli, Veilchen and the rest,
 Matrons with faces as Griselda mild,
 Coming at call. And on the farthest height
 A little tower looks out above the pines
 Where mounting you will find a sanctuary
 Open and still; without, the silent crowd
 Of heaven-planted, incense-mingling flowers;
 Within, the altar where the Mother sits
 'Mid votive tablets hung from far-off years
 By peasants succored in the peril of fire,
 Fever, or flood, who thought that Mary's love,
 Willing but not omnipotent, had stood
 Between their lives and that dread power which slew
 Their neighbor at their side. The chapel bell
 Will melt to gentlest music ere it reach
 That cottage on the slope, whose garden gate
 Has caught the rose-tree boughs and stands ajar;
 So does the door, to let the sunbeams in;
 For in the slanting sunbeams angels come
 And visit Agatha who dwells within—
 Old Agatha, whose cousins Kate and Nell
 Are housed by her in Love and Duty's name,
 They being feeble, with small withered wits,
 And she believing that the higher gift
 Was given to be shared. So Agatha
 Shares her one room, all neat on afternoons,
 As if some memory were sacred there
 And everything within the four low walls
 An honored relic.

One long summer's day
 An angel entered at the rose-hung gate,
 With skirts pale blue, a brow to quench the pearl,
 Hair soft and blonde as infants', plenteous
 As hers who made the wavy lengths once speak
 The grateful worship of a rescued soul.
 The angel paused before the open door
 To give good-day. "Come in," said Agatha.
 I followed close, and watched and listened there.
 The angel was a lady, noble, young,
 Taught in all seemliness that fits a court,
 All lore that shapes the mind to delicate use,
 Yet quiet, lowly, as a meek white dove
 That with its presence teaches gentleness.
 Men called her Countess Linda; little girls
 In Freiburg town, orphans whom she caressed,

Said Mamma Linda: yet her years were few,
 Her outward beauties all in budding time,
 Her virtues the aroma of the plant
 That dwells in all its being, root, stem, leaf,
 And waits not ripeness.

"Sit," said Agatha.

Her cousins were at work in neighboring homes,
 But yet she was not lonely; all things round
 Seemed filled with noiseless yet responsive life,
 As of a child at breast that gently clings:
 Not sunlight only or the breathing flowers
 Or the swift shadows of the birds and bees,
 But all the household goods, which, polished fair
 By hands that cherished them for service done,
 Shone as with glad content. The wooden beams
 Dark and yet friendly, easy to be reached,
 Bore three white crosses for a speaking sign;
 The walls had little pictures hung a-row,
 Telling the stories of Saint Ursula,
 And Saint Elizabeth, the lowly queen;
 And on the bench that served for table too,
 Skirting the wall to save the narrow space,
 There lay the Catholic books, inherited
 From those old times when printing still was young
 With stout-limbed promise, like a sturdy boy.
 And in the farthest corner stood the bed
 Where o'er the pillow hung two pictures wreathed
 With fresh-plucked ivy: one the Virgin's death,
 And one her flowering tomb, while high above
 She smiling bends and lets her girdle down
 For ladder to the soul that cannot trust
 In life which outlasts burial. Agatha
 Sat at her knitting, aged, upright, slim,
 And spoke her welcome with mild dignity.
 She kept the company of kings and queens
 And mitred saints who sat below the feet
 Of Francis with the ragged frock and wounds;
 And Rank for her meant Duty, various,
 Yet equal in its worth, done worthily.
 Command was service; humblest service done
 By willing and discerning souls was glory.

Fair Countess Linda sat upon the bench,
 Close fronting the old knitter, and they talked
 With sweet antiphony of young and old.

AGATHA.

You like our valley, lady? I am glad
 You thought it well to come again. But rest—
 The walk is long from Master Michael's inn.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Yes, but no walk is prettier.

AGATHA.

It is true:
 There lacks no blessing here, the waters all
 Have virtues like the garments of the Lord,

And heal much sickness; then, the crops and cows
 Flourish past speaking, and the garden flowers,
 Pink, blue, and purple, 'tis a joy to see
 How they yield honey for the singing bees.
 I would the whole world were as good a home.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And you are well off, Agatha?—your friends
 Left you a certain bread: is it not so?

AGATHA.

Not so at all, dear lady. I had nought,
 Was a poor orphan; but I came to tend
 Here in this house, an old afflicted pair,
 Who wore out slowly; and the last who died,
 Full thirty years ago, left me this roof
 And all the household stuff. It was great wealth;
 And so I had a home for Kate and Nell.

COUNTESS LINDA.

But how, then, have you earned your daily bread
 These thirty years?

AGATHA.

O, that is easy earning.
 We help the neighbors, and our bit and sup
 Is never raffing: they have work for us
 In house and field, all sorts of odds and ends,
 Patching and mending, turning o'er the hay,
 Holding sick children—there is always work;
 And they are very good—the neighbors are:
 Weigh not our bits of work with weight and scale,
 But glad themselves with giving us good shares
 Of meat and drink; and in the big farm-house
 When cloth comes home from weaving, the good wife
 Cuts me a piece—this very gown—and says:
 "Here, Agatha, you old maid, you have time
 To pray for Hans who is gone soldiering:
 The saints might help him, and they've much to do,
 'Twere well they were besought to think of him."
 She spoke half jesting, but I pray, I pray
 For poor young Hans. I take it much to heart
 That other people are worse off than I—
 I ease my soul with praying for them all.

COUNTESS LINDA.

That is your way of singing, Agatha;
 Just as the nightingales pour forth sad songs,
 And when they reach men's ears they make men's hearts
 Feel the more kindly.

AGATHA.

Nay, I cannot sing:
 My voice is hoarse, and oft I think my prayers
 Are foolish, feeble things; for Christ is good
 Whether I pray or not—the Virgin's heart
 Is kinder far than mine; and then I stop

And feel I can do nought towards helping men,
Till out it comes, like tears that will not hold,
And I must pray again for all the world.
'Tis good to me—I mean the neighbors are:
To Kate and Nell too. I have money saved
To go on pilgrimage the second time.

COUNTESS LINDA.

And do you mean to go on pilgrimage
With all your years to carry, Agatha?

AGATHA.

The years are light, dear lady: 'tis my sins
Are heavier than I would. And I shall go
All the way to Einsiedeln with that load:
I need to work it off.

COUNTESS LINDA.

What sort of sins,
Dear Agatha? I think they must be small.

AGATHA.

Nay, but they may be greater than I know;
'Tis but dim light I see by. So I try
All ways I know of to be cleansed and pure.
I would not sink where evil spirits are.
There's perfect goodness somewhere: so I strive.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You were the better for that pilgrimage
You made before? The shrine is beautiful;
And then you saw fresh country all the way.

AGATHA.

Yes, that is true. And ever since that time
The world seems greater, and the Holy Church
More wonderful. The blessed pictures all,
The heavenly images with books and wings,
Are company to me through the day and night.
The time! the time! It never seemed far back,
Only to father's father and his kin
That lived before him. But the time stretched out
After that pilgrimage: I seemed to see
Far back, and yet I knew time lay behind,
As there are countries lying still behind
The highest mountains, there in Switzerland.
O, it is great to go on pilgrimage!

COUNTESS LINDA.

Perhaps some neighbors will be pilgrims too,
And you can start together in a band.

AGATHA.

Not from these hills: people are busy here,
The beasts want tendance. One who is not missed
Can go and pray for others who must work.
I owe it to all neighbors, young and old;

For they are good past thinking—lads and girls
 Given to mischief, merry naughtiness,
 Quiet it, as the hedgehogs smooth their spines,
 For fear of hurting poor old Agatha.
 'Tis pretty: why, the cherubs in the sky
 Look young and merry, and the angels play
 On citherns, lutes, and all sweet instruments.
 I would have young things merry. See the Lord!
 A little baby playing with the birds;
 And how the Blessed Mother smiles at him.

COUNTESS LINDA.

I think you are too happy, Agatha,
 To care for heaven. Earth contents you well.

AGATHA.

Nay, nay, I shall be called, and I shall go
 Right willingly. I shall get helpless, blind,
 Be like an old stalk to be plucked away:
 The garden must be cleared for young spring plants.
 'Tis home beyond the grave, the most are there,
 All those we pray to, all the Church's lights—
 And poor old souls are welcome in their rags:
 One sees it by the pictures. Good Saint Ann,
 The Virgin's mother, she is very old,
 And had her troubles with her husband too.
 Poor Kate and Nell are younger far than I,
 But they will have this roof to cover them.
 I shall go willingly; and willingness
 Makes the yoke easy and the burden light.

COUNTESS LINDA.

When you go southward in your pilgrimage,
 Come to see me in Freiburg, Agatha.
 Where you have friends you should not go to inns.

AGATHA.

Yes, I will gladly come to see you, lady.
 And you will give me sweet hay for a bed,
 And in the morning I shall wake betimes
 And start when all the birds begin to sing.

COUNTESS LINDA.

You wear your smart clothes on the pilgrimage,
 Such pretty clothes as all the women here
 Keep by them for their best: a velvet cap
 And collar golden-broidered? They look well
 On old and young alike.

AGATHA.

Nay, I have none—
 Never had better clothes than these you see.
 Good clothes are pretty, but one sees them best
 When others wear them, and I somehow thought
 'Twas not worth while. I had so many things
 More than some neighbors, I was partly shy

Of wearing better clothes than they, and now
 I am so old and custom is so strong
 'Twould hurt me sore to put on finery.

COUNTESS LINDA.

Your gray hair is a crown, dear Agatha.
 Shake hands; good-bye. The sun is going down,
 And I must see the glory from the hill.
 I stayed among those hills; and oft heard more
 Of Agatha. I liked to hear her name,
 As that of one half grandame and half saint,
 Uttered with reverent playfulness. The lads
 And younger men all called her mother, aunt,
 Or granny, with their pet diminutives,
 And bade their lasses and their brides behave
 Right well to one who surely made a link
 'Twixt faulty folk and God by loving both:
 Not one but counted service done by her,
 Asking no pay save just her daily bread.
 At feasts and weddings, when they passed in groups
 Along the vale, and the good country wine,
 Being vocal in them, made them quire along
 In quaintly mingled mirth and piety,
 They fain must jest and play some friendly trick
 On three old maids; but when the moment came
 Always they bated breath and made their sport
 Gentle as feather-stroke, that Agatha
 Might like the waking for the love it showed.
 Their song made happy music 'mid the hills,
 For nature tuned their race to harmony,
 And poet Hans, the tailor, wrote them songs
 That grew from out their life, as crocuses
 From out the meadow's moistness. 'Twas his song
 They often sang, wending homeward from a feast—
 The song I give you. It brings in, you see,
 Their gentle jesting with the three old maids.

Midnight by the chapel bell!
 Homeward, homeward all, farewell!
 I with you, and you with me,
 Miles are short with company.

*Heart of Mary, bless the way.
 Keep us all by night and day!*

Moon and stars at feast with night
 Now have drunk their fill of light.
 Home they hurry, making time
 Trot apace, like merry rhyme.

*Heart of Mary, mystic rose,
 Send us all a sweet repose!*

Swiftly through the wood down hill,
 Run till you can hear the mill.
 Toni's ghost is wandering now,
 Shaped just like a snow-white cow.

*Heart of Mary, morning star,
 Ward off danger, near or far!*

Toni's wagon with its load
 Fell and crushed him in the road
 'Twixt these pine-trees. Never fear!
 Give a neighbor's ghost good cheer.
Holy Babe, our God and Brother,
Bind us fast to one another!

Hark! the mill is at its work,
 Now we pass beyond the murk
 To the hollow, where the moon
 Makes her silvery afternoon.
Good Saint Joseph, faithful spouse,
Help us all to keep our vows!

Here the three old maidens dwell,
 Agatha and Kate and Nell;
 See, the moon shines on the thatch,
 We will go and shake the latch.
Heart of Mary, cup of joy,
Give us mirth without alloy!

Hush, 'tis here, no noise, sing low,
 Rap with gentle knuckles—so!
 Like the little tapping birds,
 On the door; then sing good words.
Meek Saint Anna, old and fair,
Hallow all the snow-white hair!

Little maidens old, sweet dreams!
 Sleep one sleep till morning beams.
 Mothers ye, who help us all,
 Quick at hand, if ill befall.
Holy Gabriel, lily-laden,
Bless the aged mother-maiden!

Forward, mount the broad hillside
 Swift as soldiers when they ride.
 See the two towers how they peep,
 Round-capped giants, o'er the steep.
Heart of Mary, by thy sorrow,
Keep us upright through the morrow!

Now they rise quite suddenly
 Like a man from bended knee,
 Now Saint Märgen is in sight,
 Here the roads branch off—good-night!
Heart of Mary, by thy grace,
Give us with the saints a place!

ARMGART.

SCENE I.

A Salon lit with lamps and ornamented with green plants. An open piano, with many scattered sheets of music. Bronze busts of Beethoven and Gluck on pillars opposite each other. A small table spread with supper. To FRÄULEIN WALPURGA, who advances with a slight lameness of gait from an adjoining room, enters GRAF DOERNBERG at the opposite door in a travelling dress.

GRAF.

Good-morning, Fräulein!

WALPURGA.

What, so soon returned?
I feared your mission kept you still at Prague.

GRAF.

But now arrived! You see my travelling dress.
I hurried from the panting, roaring steam
Like any courier of embassy
Who hides the fiends of war within his bag.

WALPURGA.

You know that Armgart sings to-night?

GRAF.

Has sung!

'Tis close on half-past nine. The *Orpheus*
Lasts not so long. Her spirits—were they high?
Was Leo confident?

WALPURGA.

He only feared
Some tameness at beginning. Let the house
Once ring, he said, with plaudits, she is safe.

GRAF.

And Armgart?

WALPURGA.

She was stiller than her wont.
But once, at some such trivial word of mine,
As that the highest prize might yet be won
By her who took the second—she was roused.
"For me," she said, "I triumph or I fail.
I never strove for any second prize."

GRAF.

Poor human-hearted singing-bird! She bears
Cæsar's ambition in her delicate breast,
And nought to still it with but quivering song!

WALPURGA.

I had not for the world been there to-night:
Unreasonable dread oft chills me more
Than any reasonable hope can warm.

GRAF.

You have a rare affection for your cousin;
As tender as a sister's.

WALPURGA.

Nay, I fear
My love is little more than what I felt
For happy stories when I was a child.
She fills my life that would be empty else,
And lifts my nought to value by her side.

GRAF.

She is reason good enough, or seems to be,
Why all were born whose being ministers
To her completeness. Is it most her voice
Subdues us? or her instinct exquisite,
Informing each old strain with some new grace
Which takes our sense like any natural good?
Or most her spiritual energy
That sweeps us in the current of her song?

WALPURGA.

I know not. Losing either, we should lose
That whole we call our Armgart. For herself,
She often wonders what her life had been
Without that voice for channel to her soul.
She says, it must have leaped through all her limbs—
Made her a Mænad—made her snatch a brand
And fire some forest, that her rage might mount
In crashing, roaring flames through half a land,
Leaving her still and patient for a while.
“Poor wretch!” she says, of any murderess—
“The world was cruel, and she could not sing:
I carry my revenges in my throat;
I love in singing, and am loved again.”

GRAF.

Mere mood! I cannot yet believe it more.
Too much ambition has unwomaned her;
But only for a while. Her nature hides
One half its treasures by its very wealth,
Taxing the hours to show it.

WALPURGA.

Hark! she comes.

Enter LEO with a wreath in his hand, holding the door open for ARMGART, who wears a furred mantle and hood. She is followed by her maid, carrying an armful of bouquets.

LEO.

Place for the queen of song!

GRAT (*advancing towards ARMGART, who throws off her hood and mantle, and shows a star of brilliants in her hair*).

A triumph, then.

You will not be a niggard of your joy
And chide the eagerness that came to share it.

ARMGART.

O kind! you hastened your return for me.
I would you had been there to hear me sing!
Walpurga, kiss me: never tremble more
Lest Armgart's wing should fail her. She has found
This night the region where her rapture breathes—
Pouring her passion on the air made live
With human heart-throbs. Tell them, Leo, tell them
How I outsang your hope and made you cry
Because Gluck could not hear me. That was folly!
He sang, not listened: every linked note
Was his immortal pulse that stirred in mine,
And all my gladness is but part of him.
Give me the wreath.

[*She crowns the bust of GLUCK*

LEO (*sardonically*).

Ay, ay, but mark you this:

It was not part of him—that trill you made
In spite of me and reason!

ARMGART.

You were wrong—

Dear Leo, you were wrong: the house was held
As if a storm were listening with delight
And hushed its thunder.

LEO.

Will you ask the house
To teach you singing? Quit your *Orpheus* then,
And sing in farces grown to operas,
Where all the prurience of the full-fed mob
Is tickled with melodic impudence:
Jerk forth burlesque bravuras, square your arms
Akimbo with a tavern wench's grace,
And set the splendid compass of your voice
To lyric jigs. Go to! I thought you meant
To be an artist—lift your audience
To see your vision, not trick forth a show
To please the grossest taste of grossest numbers.

ARMGART (*taking up LEO's hand, and kissing it*).

Pardon, good Leo, I am penitent.
I will do penance: sing a hundred trills

Into a deep-dug grave, then burying them
As one did Midas' secret, rid myself
Of naughty exultation. O I trilled
At nature's prompting, like the nightingales.
Go scold them, dearest Leo.

LEO.

I stop my ears.
Nature in Gluck inspiring Orpheus,
Has done with nightingales. Are bird-beaks lips?

GRAF.

Truce to rebukes! Tell us—who were not there—
The double drama: how the expectant house
Took the first notes.

WALPUGA (*turning from her occupation of decking the room with the flowers*).

Yes, tell us all, dear Armgart.
Did you feel tremors? Leo, how did she look?
Was there a cheer to greet her?

LEO.

Not a sound.
She walked like Orpheus in his solitude,
And seemed to see nought but what no man saw.
'Twas famous. Not the Schroeder-Devrient
Had done it better. But your blessed public
Had never any judgment in cold blood—
Thinks all perhaps were better otherwise,
Till rapture brings a reason.

ARMGART (*scornfully*).

I knew that!
The women whispered, "Not a pretty face!"
The men, "Well, well, a goodly length of limb:
She bears the chiton."—It were all the same
Were I the Virgin Mother and my stage
The opening heavens at the Judgment-day:
Gossips would peep, jog elbows, rate the price
Of such a woman in the social mart.
What were the drama of the world to them,
Unless they felt the hell-prong?

LEO.

Peace, now, peace!
I hate my phrases to be smothered o'er
With sauce of paraphrase, my sober tune
Made bass to rambling trebles, showering down
In endless demi-semi-quavers.

ARMGART (*taking a bon-bon from the table, uplifting it before putting it into her mouth, and turning away*).

Mum!

GRAF.

Yes, tell us all the glory, leave the blame.

WALPURGA.

You first, dear Leo—what you saw and heard;
Then Armgart—she must tell us what she felt.

LEO.

Well! The first notes came clearly, firmly forth,
And I was easy, for behind those rills
I knew there was a fountain. I could see
The house was breathing gently, heads were still;
Parrot opinion was struck meekly mute,
And human hearts were swelling. Armgart stood
As if she had been new-created there
And found her voice which found a melody.
The minx! Gluck had not written, nor I taught:
Orpheus was Armgart, Armgart Orpheus.
Well, well, all through the *scena* I could feel
The silence tremble now, now poise itself
With added weight of feeling, till at last
Delight o'er-toppled it. The final note
Had happy drowning in the unloosed roar
That surged and ebbed and ever surged again,
Till expectation kept it pent awhile
Ere Orpheus returned. Pfu! He was changed:
My demi-god was pale, had downcast eyes
That quivered like a bride's who fain would send
Backward the rising tear.

ARMGART (*advancing, but then turning away, as if to check her speech*).

I was a bride,

As nuns are at their spousals.

LEO.

Ay, my lady,
That moment will not come again: applause
May come and plenty; but the first, first draught!
(*Snaps his fingers.*)
Music has sounds for it—I know no words.
I felt it once myself when they performed
My overture to Sintram. Well! 'tis strange,
We know not pain from pleasure in such joy.

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Oh, pleasure has cramped dwelling in our souls,
And when full Being comes must call on pain
To lend it liberal space.

WALPURGA.

I hope the house
Kept a reserve of plaudits: I am jealous
Lest they had dulled themselves for coming good
That should have seemed the better and the best.

LEO.

No, 'twas a revel where they had but quaffed
Their opening cup. I thank the artist's star,

His audience keeps not sober: once afire,
They flame towards climax, though his merit hold
But fairly even.

ARMGART (*her hand on LEO's arm*).

Now, now, confess the truth:
I sang still better to the very end—
All save the trill; I give that up to you,
To bite and growl at.—Why, you said yourself,
Each time I sang, it seemed new doors were oped
That you might hear heaven clearer.

LEO (*shaking his finger*),

I was raving.

ARMGART.

I am not glad with that mean vanity
Which knows no good beyond its appetite
Full feasting upon praise! I am only glad,
Being praised for what I know is worth the praise;
Glad of the proof that I myself have part
In what I worship! At the last applause—
Seeming a roar of tropic winds that tossed
The handkerchiefs and many-colored flowers,
Falling like shattered rainbows all around—
Think you I felt myself a *prima donna*?
No, but a happy spiritual star
Such as old Dante saw, wrought in a rose
Of light in Paradise, whose only self
Was consciousness of glory wide-diffused,
Music, life, power—I moving in the midst
With a sublime necessity of good.

LEO (*with a shrug*).

I thought it was a *prima donna* came
Within the side-scenes; ay, and she was proud
To find the bouquet from the royal box
Enclosed a jewel-case, and proud to wear
A star of brilliants, quite an earthly star,
Valued by thalers. Come, my lady, own
Ambition has five senses, and a self
That gives it good warm lodging when it sinks
Plump down from ecstasy.

ARMGART.

Own it? why not?

Am I a sage whose words must fall like seed
Silently buried toward a far-off spring?
I sing to living men, and my effect
Is like the summer's sun, that ripens corn
Or now or never. If the world brings me gifts,
Gold, incense, myrrh—'twill be the needful sign
That I have stirred it as the high year stirs
Before I sink to winter.

GEAF.

Ecstasies

Are short—most happily! We should but lose

Were Armgart borne too commonly and long
 Out of the self that charms us. Could I choose,
 She were less apt to soar beyond the reach
 Of woman's foibles, innocent vanities,
 Fondness for trifles like that pretty star
 Twinkling beside her cloud of ebon hair.

ARMGART (*taking out the gem and looking at it*).

This little star! I would it were the seed
 Of a whole Milky Way, if such bright shimmer
 Were the sole speech men told their rapture with
 At Armgart's music. Shall I turn aside
 From splendors which flash out the glow I make,
 And live to make, in all the chosen breasts
 Of half a continent? No, may it come,
 That splendor! May the day be near when men
 Think much to let my horses draw me home,
 And new lands welcome me upon their beach,
 Loving me for my fame. That is the truth
 Of what I wish, nay, yearn for. Shall I lie?
 Pretend to seek obscurity—to sing
 In hope of disregard? A vile pretence!
 And blasphemy besides. For what is fame
 But the benignant strength of One, transformed
 To joy of Many? Tributes, plaudits come
 As necessary breathing of such joy;
 And may they come to me!

GRAF.

The auguries

Point clearly that way. Is it no offence
 To wish the eagle's wing may find repose,
 As feebler wings do, in a quiet nest?
 Or has the taste of fame already turned
 The Woman to a Muse. . . .

LEO (*going to the table*).

Who needs no supper.

I am her priest, ready to eat her share
 Of good Walpurga's offerings.

WALPURGA.

Armgart, come.

Graf, will you come?

GRAF.

Thanks, I play truant here,

And must retrieve my self-indulged delay.
 But will the Muse receive a votary
 At any hour to-morrow?

ARMGART.

Any hour

After rehearsal, after twelve at noon.

SCENE II.

The same Salon, morning. ARMGART seated, in her bonnet and walking dress. The GRAF standing near her against the piano.

GRAF.

Armgar, to many minds the first success
Is reason for desisting. I have known
A man so versatile, he tried all arts,
But when in each by turns he had achieved
Just so much mastery as made men say,
"He could be king here if he would," he threw
The lauded skill aside. "He hates," said one,
"The level of achieved pre-eminence,
He must be conquering still;" but others said—

ARMGART.

The truth, I hope: he had a meagre soul,
Holding no depth where love could root itself.
"Could if he would?" True greatness ever will—
It lives in wholeness if it live at all,
And all its strength is knit with constancy.

GRAF.

He used to say himself he was too sane
To give his life away for excellence
Which yet must stand, an ivory statuette
Wrought to perfection through long lonely years,
Huddled in the mart of mediocrities.
He said, the very finest doing wins
The admiring only; but to have undone,
Promise and not fulfil, like buried youth,
Wins all the envious, makes them sigh your name
As that fair Absent, blameless Possible,
Which could alone impassion them; and thus,
Serene negation has free gift of all,
Panting achievement struggles, is denied,
Or wins to lose again. What say you, Armgar?
Truth has rough flavors if we bite it through;
I think this sarcasm came from out its core
Of bitter irony.

ARMGART.

It is the truth
Mean souls select to feed upon. What then?
Their meanness is a truth, which I will spurn.
The praise I seek lives not in envious breath
Using my name to blight another's deed.
I sing for love of song and that renown
Which is the spreading act, the world-wide share,
Of good that I was born with. Had I failed—
Well, that had been a truth most pitiable.
I cannot bear to think what life would be
With high hope shrunk to endurance, stunted aims
Like broken lances ground to eating-knives,
A self sunk down to look with level eyes
At low achievement, doomed from day to day
To distaste of its consciousness. But I—

GRAF.

Have won, not lost, in your decisive throw,
 And I too glory in this issue; yet,
 The public verdict has no potency
 To sway my judgment of what Armgart is:
 My pure delight in her would be but sullied,
 If it o'erflowed with mixture of men's praise.
 And had she failed, I should have said, "The pearl
 Remains a pearl for me, reflects the light
 With the same fitness that first charmed my gaze—
 Is worth as fine a setting now as then."

ARMGART (*rising*).

Oh, you are good! But why will you rehearse
 The talk of cynics, who with insect eyes
 Explore the secrets of the rubbish-heap?
 I hate your epigrams and pointed saws
 Whose narrow truth is but broad falsity.
 Confess your friend was shallow.

GRAF.

I confess

Life is not rounded in an epigram,
 And saying aught, we leave a world unsaid.
 I quoted, merely to shape forth my thought
 That high success has terrors when achieved—
 Like preternatural spouses whose dire love
 Hangs perilous on slight observances:
 Whence it were possible that Armgart crowned
 Might turn and listen to a pleading voice,
 Though Armgart striving in the race was deaf.
 You said you dared not think what life had been
 Without the stamp of eminence; have you thought
 How you will bear the poise of eminence
 With dread of sliding? Paint the future out
 As an unchecked and glorious career,
 'Twill grow more strenuous by the very love
 You bear to excellence, the very fate
 Of human powers, which tread at every step
 On possible verges.

ARMGART.

I accept the peril.

I choose to walk high with sublimer dread
 Rather than crawl in safety. And, besides,
 I am an artist as you are a noble:
 I ought to bear the burden of my rank.

GRAF.

Such parallels, dear Armgart, are but snares
 To catch the mind with seeming argument—
 Small baits of likeness 'mid disparity.
 Men rise the higher as their task is high,
 The task being well achieved. A woman's rank
 Lies in the fulness of her womanhood:
 Therein alone she is royal.

ARMGART.

Yes, I know
The oft-taught Gospel: "Woman, thy desire
Shall be that all superlatives on earth
Belong to men, save the one highest kind—
To be a mother. Thou shalt not desire
To do aught best save pure subservience:
Nature has willed it so!" O blessed Nature!
Let her be arbitress; she gave me voice
Such as she only gives a woman child,
Best of its kind, gave me ambition too,
That sense transcendent which can taste the joy
Of swaying multitudes, of being adored
For such achievement, needed excellence,
As man's best art must wait for, or be dumb.
Men did not say, when I had sung last night,
"Twas good, nay, wonderful, considering
She is a woman"—and then turn to add,
"Tenor or baritone had sung her songs
Better, of course: she's but a woman spoiled."
I beg your pardon, Graf, you said it.

GRAF.

No!

How should I say it, Armgart? I who own
The magic of your nature-given art
As sweetest effluence of your womanhood
Which, being to my choice the best, must find
The best of utterance. But this I say:
Your fervid youth beguiles you; you mistake
A strain of lyric passion for a life
Which in the spending is a chronicle
With ugly pages. Trust me, Armgart, trust me;
Ambition exquisite as yours which soars
Towards something quintessential you call fame,
Is not robust enough for this gross world
Whose fame is dense with false and foolish breath.
Ardor, a-twin with nice refining thought,
Prepares a double pain. Pain had been saved,
Nay, purer glory reached, had you been throned
As woman only, holding all your art
As attribute to that dear sovereignty—
Concentering your power in home delights
Which penetrate and purify the world.

ARMGART.

What! leave the opera with my part ill-sung
While I was warbling in a drawing-room?
Sing in the chimney-corner to inspire
My husband reading news? Let the world hear
My music only in his morning speech
Less stammering than most honorable men's?
No! tell me that my song is poor, my art
The piteous feat of weakness aping strength—
That were fit proem to your argument.
Till then, I am an artist by my birth—

By the same warrant that I am a woman:
 Nay, in the added rarer gift I see
 Supreme vocation; if a conflict comes,
 Perish—no, not the woman, but the joys
 Which men make narrow by their narrowness.
 Oh, I am happy! The great masters write
 For women's voices, and great Music wants me:
 I need not crush myself within a mould
 Of theory called Nature: I have room
 To breathe and grow unstunted.

GRAF.

Armgar, hear me.

I meant not that our talk should hurry on
 To such collision. Foresight of the ills
 Thick shadowing your path, drew on my speech
 Beyond intention. True, I came to ask
 A great renunciation, but not this
 Towards which my words at first perversely strayed,
 As if in memory of their earlier suit,
 Forgetful
 Armgar, do you remember too? the suit
 Had but postponement, was not quite disdained—
 Was told to wait and learn—what it has learned—
 A more submissive speech.

ARMGAR (with some agitation).

Then it forgot

Its lesson cruelly. As I remember,
 'Twas not to speak save to the artist crowned,
 Nor speak to her of casting off her crown.

GRAF.

Nor will it, Armgar. I come not to seek
 Any renunciation save the wife's,
 Which turns away from other possible love
 Future and worthier, to take his love
 Who asks the name of husband. He who sought
 Armgar obscure, and heard her answer, "Wait"—
 May come without suspicion now to seek
 Armgar applauded.

ARMGAR (turning towards him).

Yes, without suspicion

Of aught save what consists with faithfulness
 In all expressed intent. Forgive me, Graf—
 I am ungrateful to no soul that loves me—
 To you most grateful. Yet the best intent
 Grasps but a living present which may grow
 Like any unfledged bird. You are a noble,
 And have a high career; just now you said
 'Twas higher far than aught a woman seeks
 Beyond mere womanhood. You claim to be
 More than a husband, but could not rejoice
 That I were more than wife. What follows, then?
 You choosing me with such persistency
 As is but stretched-out rashness, soon must find

Our marriage asks concessions, asks resolve
To share renunciation or demand it.
Either we both renounce a mutual ease,
As in a nation's need both man and wife
Do public services, or one of us
Must yield that something else for which each lives
Besides the other. Men are reasoners:
That premiss of superior claims perforce
Urges conclusion—"Armgar, it is you."

GRAF.

But if I say I have considered this
With strict prevision, counted all the cost
Which that great good of loving you demands—
Questioned my stores of patience, half resolved
To live resigned without a bliss whose threat
Touched you as well as me—and finally,
With impetus of undivided will
Returned to say, "You shall be free as now;
Only accept the refuge, shelter, guard,
My love will give your freedom"—then your words
Are hard accusation.

ARMGART.

Well, I accuse myself.
My love would be accomplice of your will.

GRAF.

Again—my will?

ARMGART.

Oh, your unspoken will.
Your silent tolerance would torture me,
And on that rack I should deny the good
I yet believed in.

GRAF.

Then I am the man
Whom you would love?

ARMGART.

Whom I refuse to love!
No; I will live alone and pour my pain
With passion into music, where it turns
To what is best within my better self.
I will not take for husband one who deems
The thing my soul acknowledges as good—
The thing I hold worth striving, suffering for,
To be a thing dispensed with easily,
Or else the idol of a mind infirm.

GRAF.

Armgar, you are ungenerous; you strain
My thought beyond its mark. Our difference
Lies not so deep as love—as union
Through a mysterious fitness that transcends
Formal agreement.

ARMGART.

It lies deep enough
 To chafe the union. If many a man
 Refrains, degraded, from the utmost right,
 Because the pleadings of his wife's small fears
 Are little serpents biting at his heel,—
 How shall a woman keep her steadfastness
 Beneath a frost within her husband's eyes
 Where coldness scorches? Graf, it is your sorrow
 That you love Armgart. Nay, it is her sorrow
 That she may not love you.

GRAF.

Woman, it seems,
 Has enviable power to love or not
 According to her will.

ARMGART.

She has the will—
 I have—who am one woman—not to take
 Disloyal pledges that divide her will.
 The man who marries me must wed my Art—
 Honor and cherish it, not tolerate.

GRAF.

The man is yet to come whose theory
 Will weigh as nought with you against his love.

ARMGART.

Whose theory will plead beside his love.

GRAF.

Himself a singer, then? who knows no life
 Out of the opera books, where tenor parts
 Are found to suit him?

ARMGART.

You are bitter, Graf.
 Forgive me; seek the woman you deserve,
 All grace, all goodness, who has not yet found
 A meaning in her life, nor any end
 Beyond fulfilling yours. The type abounds.

GRAF.

And happily, for the world.

ARMGART.

Yes, happily.
 Let it excuse me that my kind is rare:
 Commonness is its own security.

GRAF.

Armgart, I would with all my soul I knew
 The man so rare that he could make your life
 As woman sweet to you, as artist safe.

ARMGART.

Oh, I can live unmated, but not live
Without the bliss of singing to the world,
And feeling all my world respond to me.

GEAF.

May it be lasting. Then, we two must part?

ARMGART.

I thank you from my heart for all. Farewell!

SCENE III.

A YEAR LATER.

The same Salon. WALPURGA is standing looking towards the window with an air
of uneasiness. DOCTOR GRAHN.

DOCTOR.

Where is my patient, Fräulein?

WALPURGA.

Fled! escaped!

Gone to rehearsal. Is it dangerous?

DOCTOR.

No, no; her throat is cured. I only came
To hear her try her voice. Had she yet sung?

WALPURGA.

No; she had meant to wait for you. She said,
"The Doctor has a right to my first song."
Her gratitude was full of little plans,
But all were swept away like gathered flowers
By sudden storm. She saw this opera bill—
It was a wasp to sting her: she turned pale,
Snatched up her hat and mufflers, said in haste,
"I go to Leo—to rehearsal—none
Shall sing *Fidelio* to-night but me!"
Then rushed down-stairs.

DOCTOR (*looking at his watch*).

And this, not long ago?

WALPURGA.

Barely an hour.

DOCTOR.

I will come again,
Returning from Charlottenburg at one.

WALPURGA.

Doctor, I feel a strange presentiment.
Are you quite easy?

DOCTOR.

She can take no harm.

'Twas time for her to sing: her throat is well.

It was a fierce attack, and dangerous;

I had to use strong remedies, but—well!

At one, dear Fräulein, we shall meet again.

SCENE IV.

TWO HOURS LATER.

WALPURGA starts up, looking towards the door. ARMGART enters, followed by LEO. She throws herself on a chair which stands with its back towards the door, speechless, not seeming to see anything. WALPURGA casts a questioning terrified look at LEO. He shrugs his shoulders, and lifts up his hands behind ARMGART, who sits like a helpless image, while WALPURGA takes off her hat and mantle.

WALPURGA.

Armgar, dear Armgar (kneeling and taking her hands),
only speak to me,

Your poor Walpurga. Oh, your hands are cold.

Clasp mine, and warm them! I will kiss them warm.

(ARMGART looks at her an instant, then draws away her hands, and, turning aside, buries her face against the back of the chair, WALPURGA rising and standing near.)

(DOCTOR GRAHN enters.)

DOCTOR.

News! stirring news to-day! wonders come thick.

ARMGART (starting up at the first sound of his voice, and speaking vehemently.)

Yes, thick, thick, thick! and you have murdered it!

Murdered my voice—poisoned the soul in me,

And kept me living.

You never told me that your cruel cures

Were clogging films—a mouldy, dead'ning blight—

A lava-mud to crust and bury me,

Yet hold me living in a deep, deep tomb,

Crying unheard forever! Oh, your cures

Are devil's triumphs: you can rob, maim, slay,

And keep a hell on the other side your cure

Where you can see your victim quivering

Between the teeth of torture—see a soul

Made keen by loss—all anguish with a good

Once known and gone! (Turns and sinks back on her chair.)

O misery, misery!

You might have killed me, might have let me sleep

After my happy day and wake—not here!

In some new unremembered world—not here,

Where all is faded, flat—a feast broke off—

Banners all meaningless—exulting words

Dull, dull—a drum that lingers in the air

Beating to melody which no man hears.

DOCTOR (*after a moment's silence*).

A sudden check has shaken you, poor child!
All things seem livid, tottering to your sense,
From inward tumult. Stricken by a threat
You see your terrors only. Tell me, Leo:
'Tis not such utter loss.

(*LEO, with a shrug, goes quietly out.*
The freshest bloom

Merely, has left the fruit; the fruit itself . . .

ARMGART.

Is ruined, withered, is a thing to hide
Away from scorn or pity. Oh, you stand
And look compassionate now, but when Death came
With mercy in his hands, you hindered him.
I did not choose to live and have your pity.
You never told me, never gave me choice
To ~~live~~ a singer, lightning-struck, unmaimed,
Or live what you would make me with your cures—
A self accursed with consciousness of change,
A mind that lives in nought but members lopped,
A power turned to pain—as meaningless
As letters fallen asunder that once made
A hymn of rapture. Oh, I had meaning once,
Like day and sweetest air. What am I now?
The millionth woman in superfluous herds.
Why should I be, do, think? 'Tis thistle-seed,
That grows and grows to feed the rubbish-heap.
Leave me alone!

DOCTOR.

Well, I will come again;
Send for me when you will, though but to rate me.
That is medicinal—a letting blood.

ARMGART.

Oh, there is one physician, only one,
Who cures and never spoils. Him I shall send for
He comes readily.

DOCTOR (*to WALPURGA*).

One word, dear Fräulein.

SCENE V.

ARMGART, WALPURGA.

ARMGART.

Walpurga, have you walked this morning?

WALPURGA.

No

ARMGART.

Go, then, and walk; I wish to be alone.

WALPURGA.

I will not leave you.

AEMGART.

Will not, at my wish?

WALPURGA.

Will not, because you wish it. Say no more,
But take this draught.

AEMGART.

The Doctor gave it you?

It is an anodyne. Put it away.
He cured me of my voice, and now he wants
To cure me of my vision and resolve—
Drug me to sleep that I may wake again
Without a purpose, abject as the rest
To bear the yoke of life. He shall not cheat me
Of that fresh strength which anguish gives the soul.
The inspiration of revolt, ere rage
Slackens to faltering. Now I see the truth.

WALPURGA (*setting down the glass*).

Then you must see a future in your reach,
With happiness enough to make a dower
For two of modest claims.

AEMGART.

Oh, you intone

That chant of consolation wherewith ease
Makes itself easier in the sight of pain.

WALPURGA.

No; I would not console you, but rebuke.

AEMGART.

That is more bearable. Forgive me, dear.
Say what you will. But now I want to write.

(*She rises and moves towards a table.*)

WALPURGA.

I say, then, you are simply fevered, mad;
You cry aloud at horrors that would vanish
If you would change the light, throw into shade
The loss you aggrandize, and let day fall
On good remaining, nay on good refused
Which may be gain now. Did you not reject
A woman's lot more brilliant, as some held,
Than any singer's? It may still be yours.
Graf Dornberg loved you well.

AEMGART.

Not me, not me.

He loved one well who was like me in all
Save in a voice which made that All unlike

As diamond is to charcoal. Oh, a man's love!
Think you he loves a woman's inner self
Aching with loss of loveliness?—as mothers
Cleave to the palpitating pain that dwells
Within their misformed offspring?

WALPURGA.

But the Graf
Chose you as simple Armgart—had preferred
That you should never seek for any fame
But such as matrons have who rear great sons.
And therefore you rejected him; but now—

ARMGART.

Ay, now—now he would see me as I am,
(She takes up a hand-mirror.)
Russet and songless as a missel-thrush.
An ordinary girl—a plain brown girl,
Who, if some meaning flash from out her words,
Shocks as a disproportioned thing—a Will
That, like an arm astretch and broken off,
Has nought to hurl—the torso of a soul.
I sang him into love of me: my song
Was consecration, lifted me apart
From the crowd chiselled like me, sister forms,
But empty of divineness. Nay, my charm
Was half that I could win fame yet renounce!
A wife with glory possible absorbed
Into her husband's actual.

WALPURGA.

For shame!
Armgar, you slander him. What would you say
If now he came to you and asked again
That you would be his wife?

ARMGART.

No, and thrice no!
It would be pitying constancy, not love,
That brought him to me now. I will not be
A pensioner in marriage. Sacraments
Are not to feed the paupers of the world.
If he were generous—I am generous too.

WALPURGA.

Proud, Armgart, but not generous.

ARMGART.

Say no more,
He will not know until—

WALPURGA.

He knows already.

ARMGART *(quickly)*.

Is he come back?

WALPURGA.

Yes, and will soon be here.
The Doctor had twice seen him and would go
From hence again to see him.

ARMGART.

Well, he *knows*.

It is all one.

WALPURGA.

What if he were outside?
I hear a footstep in the ante-room.

ARMGART (*raising herself and assuming calmness*).

Why let him come, of course. I shall behave
Like what I am, a common personage
Who looks for nothing but civility.
I shall not play the fallen heroine,
Assume a tragic part and throw out cues
For a beseeching lover.

WALPURGA.

Some one raps.

(*Goes to the door.*)

A letter—from the Graf.

ARMGART.

Then open it.

(WALPURGA *still offers it.*)

Nay, my head swims. Read it. I cannot see.

(WALPURGA *opens it, reads and pauses.*)

Read it. Have done! No matter what it is.

WALPURGA (*reads in a low, hesitating voice*).

"I am deeply moved—my heart is rent, to hear of your illness and its cruel result, just now communicated to me by Dr. Grahm. But surely it is possible that this result may not be permanent. For youth such as yours, Time may hold in store something more than resignation: who shall say that it does not hold renewal? I have not dared to ask admission to you in the hours of a recent shock, but I cannot depart on a long mission without tendering my sympathy and my farewell. I start this evening for the Caucasus, and thence I proceed to India, where I am intrusted by the Government with business which may be of long duration."

(WALPURGA *sits down dejectedly.*)ARMGART (*after a slight shudder, bitterly*).

The Graf has much discretion. I am glad.
He spares us both a pain, not seeing me.
What I like least is that consoling hope—
That empty cup, so neatly ciphered "Time,"
Handed me as a cordial for despair.
(*Slowly and dreamily*) Time—what a word to fling as charity!
Bland neutral word for slow, dull-beating pain—
Days, months, and years!—If I would wait for them.

(*She takes up her hat and puts it on, then wraps her mantle round her.* WALPURGA *leaves the room.*)

Why, this is but beginning. (WALP. re-enters.) Kiss me, dear
I am going now—alone—out—for a walk.
Say you will never wound me any more
With such cajolery as nurses use
To patients amorous of a crippled life.
Flatter the blind: I see.

WALPURGA.

Well, I was wrong.
In haste to soothe, I snatched at flickers merely.
Believe me, I will flatter you no more.

ARMGART.

Bear witness, I am calm. I read my lot
As soberly as if it were a tale
Writ by a creeping feuilletonist and called
"The Woman's Lot: a Tale of Everyday:"
A middling woman's, to impress the world
With high superfluoussness; her thoughts a crop
Of chick-weed errors or of pot-herb facts,
Smiled at like some child's drawing on a slate.
"Genteel?" "O yes, gives lessons; not so good
As any man's would be, but cheaper far."
"Pretty?" "No; yet she makes a figure fit
For good society. Poor thing, she sews
Both late and early, turns and alters all
To suit the changing mode. Some widower
Might do well, marrying her; but in these days! . . .
Well, she can somewhat eke her narrow gains
By writing, just to furnish her with gloves
And droschkies in the rain. They print her things
Often for charity."—Oh, a dog's life!
A harnessed dog's, that draws a little cart
Voted a nuisance! I am going now.

WALPURGA.

Not now, the door is locked.

ARMGART.

Give me the key!

WALPURGA.

Locked on the outside. Gretchen has the key:
She is gone on errands.

ARMGART.

What, you dare to keep me

Your prisoner?

WALPURGA.

And have I not been yours?
Your wish has been a bolt to keep me in.
Perhaps that middling woman whom you paint
With far-off scorn. . . .

ARMGART.

I paint what I must be
What is my soul to me without the voice

That gave it freedom?—gave it one grand touch
 And made it nobly human?—Prisoned now,
 Prisoned in all the petty mimicries
 Called woman's knowledge, that will fit the world
 As doll-clothes fit a man. I can do nought
 Better than what a million women do—
 Must drudge among the crowd and feel my life
 Beating upon the world without response,
 Beating with passion through an insect's horn
 That moves a millet-seed laboriously.
 If I *would* do it!

WALPURGA (*coldly*).

And why should you not?

ARMGART (*turning quickly*).

Because Heaven made me royal—wrought me out
 With subtle finish towards pre-eminence,
 Made every channel of my soul converge
 To one high function, and then flung me down,
 That breaking I might turn to subtlest pain.
 An inborn passion gives a rebel's right:
 I would rebel and die in twenty worlds
 Sooner than bear the yoke of thwarted life,
 Each keenest sense turned into keen distaste,
 Hunger not satisfied but kept alive
 Breathing in languor half a century.
 All the world now is but a rack of threads
 To twist and dwarf me into pettiness
 And basely feigned content, the placid mask
 Of women's misery.

WALPURGA (*indignantly*).

Ay, such a mask

As the few born like you to easy joy,
 Cradled in privilege, take for natural
 On all the lowly faces that must look
 Upward to you! What revelation now
 Shows you the mask or gives presentiment
 Of sadness hidden? You who every day
 These five years saw me limp to wait on you,
 And thought the order perfect which gave *me*,
 The girl without pretension to be aught,
 A splendid cousin for my happiness:
 To watch the night through when her brain was fired
 With too much gladness—listen, always listen
 To what *she* felt, who having power had right
 To feel exorbitantly, and submerge
 The souls around her with the poured-out flood
 Of what must be ere she were satisfied!
 That was feigned patience, was it? Why not love,
 Love nurtured even with that strength of self
 Which found no room save in another's life?
 Oh, such as I know joy by negatives,
 And all their deepest passion is a pang
 Till they accept their pauper's heritage,
 And meekly live from out the general store

Of joy they were born stripped of. I accept—
Nay, now would sooner choose it than the wealth
Of natures you call royal, who can live
In mere mock knowledge of their fellows' woe,
Thinking their smiles may heal it.

ARMGART (*tremulously*).

Nay, Walpurga,

I did not make a palace of my joy
To shut the world's truth from me. All my good
Was that I touched the world and made a part
In the world's dower of beauty, strength, and bliss;
It was the glimpse of consciousness divine
Which pours out day and sees the day is good.
Now I am fallen dark; I sit in gloom,
Remembering bitterly. Yet you speak truth;
I wearied you, it seems; took all your help
As cushioned nobles use a weary serf,
Not looking at his face.

WALPURGA.

Oh, I but stand
As a small symbol for the mighty sum
Of claims unpaid to needy myriads;
I think you never set your loss beside
That mighty deficit. Is your work gone—
The prouder queenly work that paid itself
And yet was overpaid with men's applause?
Are you no longer chartered, privileged,
But sunk to simple woman's penury,
To ruthless Nature's chary average—
Where is the rebel's right for you alone?
Noble rebellion lifts a common load;
But what is he who flings his own load off
And leaves his fellows toiling? Rebel's right?
Say rather, the deserter's. Oh, you smiled
From your clear height on all the million lots
Which yet you brand as abject.

ARMGART.

I was blind
With too much happiness: true vision comes
Only, it seems, with sorrow. Were there one
This moment near me, suffering what I feel,
And needing me for comfort in her pang—
Then it were worth the while to live; not else.

WALPURGA.

One—near you—why, they throng! you hardly stir
But your act touches them. We touch afar.
For did not swarthy slaves of yesterday
Leap in their bondage at the Hebrews' flight,
Which touched them through the thrice millennial dark?
But you can find the sufferer you need
With touch less subtle.

ARMGART.

Who has need of me?

WALPURGA.

Love finds the need it fills. But you are hard.

ARMGART.

Is it not you, Walpurga, who are hard?
You humored all my wishes till to-day,
When fate has blighted me.

WALPURGA.

You would not hear
The "chant of consolation;" words of hope
Only embittered you. Then hear the truth—
A lame girl's truth, whom no one ever praised
For being cheerful. "It is well," they said:
"Were she cross-grained she could not be endured."
A word of truth from her had startled you;
But you—you claimed the universe; nought less
Than all existence working in sure tracks
Towards your supremacy. The wheels might scathe
A myriad destinies—nay, must perforce;
But yours they must keep clear of; just for you
The seething atoms through the firmament
Must bear a human heart—which you had not!
For what is it to you that women, men,
Plod, faint, are weary, and espouse despair
Of aught but fellowship? Save that you spurn
To be among them? Now, then, you are lame—
Maimed, as you said, and levelled with the crowd:
Call it new birth—birth from that monstrous Self
Which, smiling down upon a race oppressed,
Says, "All is good, for I am throned at ease."
Dear Armgart—nay, you tremble—I am cruel.

ARMGART.

O no! hark! Some one knocks. Come in!—come in!
(Enter LEO.)

LEO.

See, Gretchen let me in. I could not rest
Longer away from you.

ARMGART.

Sit down, dear Leo.
Walpurga, I would speak with him alone.
(WALPURGA goes out.)

LEO (hesitatingly).

You mean to walk?

ARMGART.

No, I shall stay within.
(She takes off her hat and mantle, and sits down immediately. After a pause,
speaking in a subdued tone to LEO.)
How old are you?

LEO.

Threescore and five.

ARMGART.

That's old.

I never thought till now how you have lived.
They hardly ever play your music?

LEO (*raising his eyebrows and throwing out his lip*).

No!

Schubert too wrote for silence: half his work
Lay like a frozen Rhine till summers came
That warmed the grass above him. Even so!
His music lives now with a mighty youth.

ARMGART.

Do you think yours will live when you are dead?

LEO.

Pfui! The time was, I drank that home-brewed wine
And found it heady, while my blood was young:
Now it scarce warms me. Tipple it as I may,
I am sober still, and say: "My old friend Leo,
Much grain is wasted in the world and rots;
Why not thy handful?"

ARMGART.

Strange! since I have known you
Till now I never wondered how you lived.
When I sang well—that was your jubilee.
But you were old already.

LEO.

Yes, child, yes:

Youth thinks itself the goal of each old life;
Age has but travelled from a far-off time
Just to be ready for youth's service. Well!
It was my chief delight to perfect you.

ARMGART.

Good Leo! You have lived on little joys.
But your delight in me is crushed forever.
Your pains, where are they now? They shaped intent
Which action frustrates; shaped an inward sense
Which is but keen despair, the agony
Of highest vision in the lowest pit.

LEO.

Nay, nay, I have a thought: keep to the stage,
To drama without song; for you can act—
Who knows how well, when all the soul is poured
Into that sluice alone?

ARMGART.

I know, and you:

The second or third best in tragedies
That cease to touch the fibre of the time.
No; song is gone, but nature's other gift,

Self-judgment, is not gone. Song was my speech,
 And with its impulse only, action came:
 Song was the battle's onset, when cool purpose
 Glows into rage, becomes a warring god
 And moves the limbs with miracle. But now—
 Oh, I should stand hemmed in with thoughts and rules—
 Say "This way passion acts," yet never feel
 The might of passion. How should I declaim?
 As monsters write with feet instead of hands.
 I will not feed on doing great tasks ill,
 Dull the world's sense with mediocrity,
 And live by trash that smothers excellence.
 One gift I had that ranked me with the best—
 The secret of my frame—and that is gone.
 For all life now I am a broken thing.
 But silence there! Good Leo, advise me now.
 I would take humble work and do it well—
 Teach music, singing—what I can—not here,
 But in some smaller town where I may bring
 The method you have taught me, pass your gift
 To others who can use it for delight.
 You think I can do that?

(She pauses, with a sob in her voice.)

LEO.

Yes, yes, dear child!

And it were well, perhaps, to change the place—
 Begin afresh as I did when I left
 Vienna with a heart half broken.

ARMGART *(roused by surprise)*.

You?

LEO.

Well, it is long ago. But I had lost—
 No matter! We must bury our dead joys
 And live above them with a living world.
 But whither, think you, you would like to go?

ARMGART.

To Freiburg.

LEO

In the Breisgau? And why there?

It is too small.

ARMGART.

Walpurga was born there,
 And loves the place. She quitted it for me
 These five years past. Now I will take her there.
 Dear Leo, I will bury my dead joy.

LEO.

Mothers do so, bereaved; then learn to love
 Another's living child.

ARMGART.

Oh, it is hard
To take the little corpse, and lay it low,
And say, "None misses it but me."
She sings. . . .
I mean Paulina sings Fidelio,
And they will welcome her to-night.

LEO.

Well, well,
'Tis better that our griefs should not spread far.

1870.

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HOW LISA LOVED THE KING.

Six hundred years ago, in Dante's time,
Before his cheek was furrowed by deep rhyme—
When Europe, fed afresh from Eastern story,
Was like a garden tangled with the glory
Of flowers hand-planted and of flowers air-sown,
Climbing and trailing, budding and full-blown,
Where purple bells are tossed amid pink stars,
And springing blades, green troops in innocent wars,
Crowd every shady spot of teeming earth,
Making invisible motion visible birth—
Six hundred years ago, Palermo town
Kept holiday. A deed of great renown,
A high revenge, had freed it from the yoke
Of hated Frenchmen, and from Calpe's rock
To where the Bosphorus caught the earlier sun,
'Twas told that Pedro, King of Aragon,
Was welcomed master of all Sicily,
A royal knight, supreme as kings should be
In strength and gentleness that make high chivalry.

Spain was the favorite home of knightly grace,
Where generous men rode steeds of generous race;
Both Spanish, yet half Arab, both inspired
By mutual spirit, that each motion fired
With beauteous response, like minstrelsy
Afresh fulfilling fresh expectancy.
So when Palermo made high festival,
The joy of matrons and of maidens all
Was the mock terror of the tournament,
Where safety, with the glimpse of danger blent,
Took exaltation as from epic song,
Which greatly tells the pains that to great life belong.

And in all eyes King Pedro was the king
Of cavaliers: as in a full-gemmed ring
The largest ruby, or as that bright star
Whose shining shows us where the Hyads are.
His the best jennet, and he sat it best;
His weapon, whether tilting or in rest,
Was worthiest watching, and his face once seen
Gave to the promise of his royal mien
Such rich fulfilment as the opened eyes
Of a loved sleeper, or the long-watched rise
Of vernal day, whose joy o'er stream and meadow flies.

But of the maiden forms that thick enwreathed
The broad piazza and sweet witchery breathed,

With innocent faces budding all arow
 From balconies and windows high and low,
 Who was it felt the deep mysterious glow,
 The impregnation with supernal fire
 Of young ideal love—transformed desire,
 Whose passion is but worship of that Best
 Taught by the many-mingled creed of each young breast?

'Twas gentle Lisa, of no noble line,
 Child of Bernardo, a rich Florentine,
 Who from his merchant-city hither came
 To trade in drugs; yet kept an honest fame,
 And had the virtue not to try and sell
 Drugs that had none. He loved his riches well,
 But loved them chiefly for his Lisa's sake,
 Whom with a father's care he sought to make
 The bride of some true honorable man:—
 Of Perdicone (so the rumor ran),
 Whose birth was higher than his fortunes were;
 For still your trader likes a mixture fair
 Of blood that hurries to some higher strain
 Than reckoning money's loss and money's gain.
 And of such mixture good may surely come:
 Lords' scions so may learn to cast a sum,
 A trader's grandson bear a well-set head,
 And have less conscious manners, better bred;
 Nor, when he tries to be polite, be rude instead.

'Twas Perdicone's friends made overtures
 To good Bernardo; so one dame assures
 Her neighbor dame who notices the youth
 Fixing his eyes on Lisa; and in truth
 Eyes that could see her on this summer day
 Might find it hard to turn another way.
 She had a pensive beauty, yet not sad;
 Rather, like minor cadences that glad
 The hearts of little birds amid spring boughs;
 And oft the trumpet or the joust would rouse
 Pulses that gave her cheek a finer glow,
 Parting her lips that seemed a mimic bow
 By chiselling Love for play in coral wrought,
 Then quickened by him with the passionate thought,
 The soul that trembled in the lustrous night
 Of slow long eyes. Her body was so slight,
 It seemed she could have floated in the sky,
 And with the angelic choir made symphony;
 But in her cheek's rich tinge, and in the dark
 Of darkest hair and eyes, she bore a mark
 Of kinship to her generous mother earth,
 The fervid land that gives the plummy palm-trees birth.

She saw not Perdicone; her young mind
 Dreamed not that any man had ever pined
 For such a little simple maid as she:
 She had but dreamed how heavenly it would be
 To love some hero noble, beauteous, great,
 Who would live stories worthy to narrate,

Like Roland, or the warriors of Troy,
 The Cid, or Amadis, or that fair boy
 Who conquered everything beneath the sun,
 And somehow, some time, died at Babylon
 Fighting the Moors. For heroes all were good
 And fair as that archangel who withstood
 The Evil One, the author of all wrong—
 That Evil One who made the French so strong;
 And now the flower of heroes must be he
 Who drove those tyrants from dear Sicily,
 So that her maids might walk to vespers tranquilly.

Young Lisa saw this hero in the king,
 And as wood-lilies that sweet odors bring
 Might dream the light that opes their modest eyne
 Was lily-odored,—and as rights divine,
 Round turf-laid altars, or 'neath roofs of stone,
 Draw sanctity from out the heart alone
 That loves and worships, so the miniature
 Perplexed of her soul's world all virgin pure,
 Filled with heroic virtues that bright form—
 Raona's royalty, the finished norm
 Of horsemanship—the half of chivalry:
 For how could generous men avengers be,
 Save as God's messengers on coursers fleet?—
 These, scouring earth, made Spain with Syria meet
 In one self world where the same right had sway,
 And good must grow as grew the blessed day.
 No more; great Love his essence had endued
 With Pedro's form, and entering subdued
 The soul of Lisa, fervid and intense,
 Proud in its choice of proud obedience
 To hardship glorified by perfect reverence.

Sweet Lisa homeward carried that dire guest,
 And in her chamber through the hours of rest
 The darkness was alight for her with sheen
 Of arms, and plumèd helm, and bright between
 Their commoner gloss, like the pure living spring
 'Twixt porphyry lips, or living bird's bright wing
 'Twixt golden wires, the glances of the king
 Flashed on her soul, and waked vibrations there
 Of known delights love-mixed to new and rare:
 The impalpable dream was turned to breathing flesh,
 Chill thought of summer to the warm close mesh
 Of sunbeams held between the citron-leaves,
 Clothing her life of life. Oh, she believes
 That she could be content if he but knew
 (Her poor small self could claim no other due)
 How Lisa's lowly love had highest reach
 Of wingèd passion, whereto wingèd speech
 Would be scorched remnants left by mounting flame.
 Though, had she such lame message, were it blame
 To tell what greatness dwelt in her, what rank
 She held in loving? Modest maidens shrank
 From telling love that fed on selfish hope;
 But love, as hopeless as the shattering song
 Wailed for loved beings who have joined the throng

Of mighty dead ones. . . . Nay, but she was weak—
 Knew only prayers and ballads—could not speak
 With eloquence save what dumb creatures have,
 That with small cries and touches small boons crave.

She watched all day that she might see him pass
 With knights and ladies; but she said, "Alas!
 Though he should see me, it were all as one
 He saw a pigeon sitting on the stone
 Of wall or balcony:—some colored spot
 His eye just sees, his mind regardeth not.
 I have no music-touch that could bring nigh
 My love to his soul's hearing. I shall die,
 And he will never know who Lisa was—
 The trader's child, whose soaring spirit rose
 As hedge-born aloe-flowers that rarest years disclose.

"For were I now a fair deep-breasted queen
 A-horseback, with blonde hair, and tunic green
 Gold-bordered, like Costanza, I should need
 No change within to make me queenly there;
 For they the royal-hearted women are
 Who nobly love the noblest, yet have grace
 For needy suffering lives in lowliest place,
 Carrying a choicer sunlight in their smile,
 The heavenliest ray that pitieth the vile.
 My love is such, it cannot choose but soar
 Up to the highest; yet for evermore,
 Though I were happy, throned beside the king,
 I should be tender to each little thing
 With hurt warm breast, that had no speech to tell
 Its inward pang, and I would soothe it well
 With tender touch and with a low soft moan
 For company: my dumb love-pang is lone,
 Prisoned as topaz-beam within a rough-garbed stone."

So, inward-wailing, Lisa passed her days.
 Each night the August moon with changing phase
 Looked broader, harder on her unchanged pain;
 Each noon the heat lay heavier again
 On her despair; until her body frail
 Shrank like the snow that watchers in the vale
 See narrowed on the height each summer morn;
 While her dark glance burnt larger, more forlorn,
 As if the soul within her all on fire
 Made of her being one swift funeral pyre.
 Father and mother saw with sad dismay
 The meaning of their riches melt away:
 For without Lisa what would sequins buy?
 What wish were left if Lisa were to die?
 Through her they cared for summers still to come,
 Else they would be as ghosts without a home
 In any flesh that could feel glad desire.
 They pay the best physicians, never tire
 Of seeking what will soothe her, promising
 That aught she longed for, though it were a thing
 Hard to be come at as the Indian snow,
 Or roses that on alpine summits blow—

It should be hers. She answers with low voice,
 She longs for death alone--death is her choice;
 Death is the King who never did think scorn,
 But rescues every meanest soul to sorrow born.

Yet one day, as they bent above her bed
 And watched her in brief sleep, her drooping head
 Turned gently, as the thirsty flowers that feel
 Some moist revival through their petals steal,
 And little flutterings of her lids and lips
 Told of such dreamy joy as sometimes dips
 A skyeey shadow in the mind's poor pool.
 She oped her eyes, and turned their dark gems full
 Upon her father, as in utterance dumb
 Of some new prayer that in her sleep had come.
 "What is it, Lisa?" "Father, I would see
 Minuccio, the great singer; bring him me."
 For always, night and day, her unstilled thought,
 Wandering all o'er its little world, had sought
 How she could reach, by some soft pleading touch,
 King Pedro's soul, that she who loved so much
 Dying, might have a place within his mind—
 A little grave which he would sometimes find
 And plant some flower on it—some thought, some memory kind.
 Till in her dream she saw Minuccio
 Touching his viola, and chanting low
 A strain that, falling on her brokenly,
 Seemed blossoms lightly blown from off a tree,
 Each burdened with a word that was a scent—
 Raona, Lisa, love, death, tournament;
 Then in her dream she said, "He sings of me—
 Might be my messenger; ah, now I see
 The king is listening—" Then she awoke,
 And, missing her dear dream, that new-born longing spoke.

She longed for music: that was natural;
 Physicians said it was medicinal;
 The humors might be schooled by true consent
 Of a fine tenor and fine instrument;
 In brief, good music, mixed with doctor's stuff,
 Apollo with Asklepios—enough!
 Minuccio, entreated, gladly came.
 (He was a singer of most gentle fame—
 A noble, kindly spirit, not elate
 That he was famous, but that song was great—
 Would sing as finely to this suffering child
 As at the court where princes on him smiled.)
 Gently he entered and sat down by her,
 Asking what sort of strain she would prefer—
 The voice alone, or voice with viol wed;
 Then, when she chose the last, he preluded
 With magic hand, that summoned from the strings
 Aerial spirits, rare yet vibrant wings
 That fanned the pulses of his listener,
 And waked each sleeping sense with blissful stir.
 Her cheek already showed a slow faint blush,
 But soon the voice, in pure full liquid rush,

Made all the passion, that till now she felt,
 Seem but cool waters that in warmer melt.
 Finished the song, she prayed to be alone
 With kind Minuccio; for her faith had grown
 To trust him as if missioned like a priest
 With some high grace, that when his singing ceased
 Still made him wiser, more magnanimous
 Than common men who had no genius.

So laying her small hand within his palm,
 She told him how that secret glorious harm
 Of loftiest loving had befallen her;
 That death, her only hope, most bitter were,
 If when she died her love must perish too
 As songs unsung and thoughts unspoken do,
 Which else might live within another breast.
 She said, "Minuccio, the grave were rest,
 If I were sure, that lying cold and lone,
 My love, my best of life, had safely flown
 And nestled in the bosom of the king;
 See, 'tis a small weak bird, with unfledged wing.
 But you will carry it for me secretly,
 And bear it to the king, then come to me
 And tell me it is safe, and I shall go
 Content, knowing that he I love my love doth know."

Then she wept silently, but each large tear
 Made pleading music to the inward ear
 Of good Minuccio. "Lisa, trust in me,"
 He said, and kissed her fingers loyally;
 "It is sweet law to me to do your will,
 And ere the sun his round shall thrice fulfil,
 I hope to bring you news of such rare skill
 As amulets have, that aches in trusting bosoms still."

He needed not to pause and first devise
 How he should tell the king; for in nowise
 Were such love-message worthily bested
 Save in fine verse by music rendered.
 He sought a poet-friend, a Siennese,
 And "Mico, mine," he said, "full oft to please
 Thy whim of sadness I have sung thee strains
 To make thee weep in verse: now pay my pains,
 And write me a canzon divinely sad,
 Sinlessly passionate and meekly mad
 With young despair, speaking a maiden's heart
 Of fifteen summers, who would fain depart
 From ripening life's new-urgent mystery—
 Love-choice of one too high her love to be—
 But cannot yield her breath till she has poured
 Her strength away in this hot-bleeding word
 Telling the secret of her soul to her soul's lord."

Said Mico, "Nay, that thought is poesy,
 I need but listen as it sings to me.
 Come thou again to-morrow." The third day,
 When linked notes had perfected the lay,
 Minuccio had his summons to the court
 To make, as he was wont, the moments short

Of ceremonious dinner to the king.
 This was the time when he had meant to bring
 Melodious message of young Lisa's love:
 He waited till the air had ceased to move
 To ringing silver, till Falernian wine
 Made quickened sense with quietude combine,
 And then with passionate descant made each ear incline.

*Love, thou didst see me, light as morning's breath,
 Roaming a garden in a joyous error,
 Laughing at chases vain, a happy child,
 Till of thy countenance the alluring terror
 In majesty from out the blossoms smiled,
 From out their life seeming a beauteous Death.*

*O Love, who so didst choose me for thine own,
 Taking this little isle to thy great sway,
 See now, it is the honor of thy throne
 That what thou gavest perish not away,
 Nor leave some sweet remembrance to atone
 By life that will be for the brief life gone:
 Hear, ere the shroud o'er these frail limbs be thrown—
 Since every king is vassal unto thee,
 My heart's lord needs must listen loyally—
 O tell him I am waiting for my Death!*

*Tell him, for that he hath such royal power
 'Twere hard for him to think how small a thing,
 How slight a sign, would make a wealthy dower
 For one like me, the bride of that pale king
 Whose bed is mine at some swift-nearing hour.
 Go to my lord, and to his memory bring
 That happy birthday of my sorrowing
 When his large glance made meaner gazers glad,
 Entering the bannered lists: 'twas then I had
 The wound that laid me in the arms of Death.*

*Tell him, O Love, I am a lowly maid,
 No more than any little knot of thyme
 That he with careless foot may often tread;
 Yet lowest fragrance oft will mount sublime
 And cleave to things most high and hallowed,
 As doth the fragrance of my life's springtime,
 My lowly love, that soaring seeks to climb
 Within his thought, and make a gentle bliss,
 More blissful than if mine, in being his:
 So shall I live in him and rest in Death.*

The strain was new. It seemed a pleading cry,
 And yet a rounded perfect melody,
 Making grief beauteous as the tear-filled eyes
 Of little child at little miseries.
 Trembling at first, then swelling as it rose,
 Like rising light that broad and broader grows,
 It filled the hall, and so possessed the air
 That not one breathing soul was present there,
 Though dumbest, slowest, but was quivering
 In music's grasp, and forced to hear her sing.

But most such sweet compulsion took the mood
 Of Pedro (tired of doing what he would).
 Whether the words which that strange meaning bore
 Were but the poet's feigning or aught more,
 Was bounden question, since their aim must be
 At some imagined or true royalty.
 He called Minuccio and bade him tell
 What poet of the day had writ so well;
 For though they came behind all former rhymes,
 The verses were not bad for these poor times.
 "Monsignor, they are only three days old,"
 Minuccio said; "but it must not be told
 How this song grew, save to your royal ear."
 Eager, the king withdrew where none was near,
 And gave close audience to Minuccio,
 Who meetly told that love-tale meet to know.
 The king had features pliant to confess
 The presence of a manly tenderness—
 Son, father, brother, lover, blent in one,
 In fine harmonic exaltation—
 The spirit of religious chivalry.
 He listened, and Minuccio could see
 The tender, generous admiration spread
 O'er all his face, and glorify his head
 With royalty that would have kept its rank
 Though his brocaded robes to tatters shrank.
 He answered without pause, "So sweet a maid,
 In nature's own insignia arrayed,
 Though she were come of unmixed trading blood
 That sold and bartered ever since the Flood,
 Would have the self-contained and single worth
 Of radiant jewels born in darksome earth.
 Raona were a shame to Sicily,
 Letting such love and tears unhonored be:
 Hasten, Minuccio, tell her that the king
 To-day will surely visit her when vespers ring."

Joyful, Minuccio bore the joyous word,
 And told at full, while none but Lisa heard,
 How each thing had befallen, sang the song,
 And like a patient nurse who would prolong
 All means of soothing, dwelt upon each tone,
 Each look, with which the mighty Aragon
 Marked the high worth his royal heart assigned
 To that dear place he held in Lisa's mind.
 She listened till the draughts of pure content
 Through all her limbs like some new being went—
 Life, not recovered, but untried before,
 From out the growing world's unmeasured store
 Of fuller, better, more divinely mixed.
 'Twas glad reverse: she had so firmly fixed
 To die, already seemed to fall a veil
 Shrouding the inner glow from light of senses pale.

Her parents wondering see her half arise—
 Wondering, rejoicing, see her long dark eyes
 Brimful with clearness, not of 'scaping tears,
 But of some light ethereal that enspheres

Their orbs with calm, some vision newly learnt
 Where strangest fires erewhile had blindly burnt.
 She asked to have her soft white robe and band
 And coral ornaments, and with her hand
 She gave her locks' dark length a backward fall,
 Then looked intently in a mirror small,
 And feared her face might perhaps displease the king;
 "In truth," she said, "I am a tiny thing;
 I was too bold to tell what could such visit bring."

Meanwhile the king, revolving in his thought
 That virgin passion, was more deeply wrought
 To chivalrous pity; and at vesper bell,
 With careless mien which hid his purpose well,
 Went forth on horseback, and as if by chance
 Passing Bernardo's house, he paused to glance
 At the fine garden of this wealthy man,
 This Tuscan trader turned Palermitan:
 But, presently dismounting, chose to walk
 Amid the trellises, in gracious talk
 With this same trader, deigning even to ask
 If he had yet fulfilled the father's task
 Of marrying that daughter whose young charms
 Himself, betwixt the passages of arms,
 Noted admiringly. "Monsignor, no,
 She is not married; that were little woe,
 Since she has counted barely fifteen years;
 But all such hopes of late have turned to fears;
 She droops and fades; though for a space quite brief—
 Scarce three hours past—she finds some strange relief."
 The king avised: "'Twere dole to all of us,
 The world should lose a maid so beauteous;
 Let me now see her; since I am her liege lord,
 Her spirits must wage war with death at my strong word."

In such half-serious playfulness, he wends,
 With Lisa's father and two chosen friends,
 Up to the chamber where she pillowed sits
 Watching the open door, that now admits
 A presence as much better than her dreams,
 As happiness than any longing seems.
 The king advanced, and, with a reverent kiss
 Upon her hand, said, "Lady, what is this?
 You, whose sweet youth should others' solace be,
 Pierce all our hearts, languishing piteously.
 We pray you, for the love of us, be cheered,
 Nor be too reckless of that life, endeared
 To us who know your passing worthiness,
 And count your blooming life as part of our life's bliss."

Those words, that touch upon her hand from him
 Whom her soul worshipped, as far seraphim
 Worship the distant glory, brought some shame
 Quivering upon her cheek, yet thrilled her frame
 With such deep joy she seemed in paradise,
 In wondering gladness, and in dumb surprise
 That bliss could be so blissful: then she spoke—
 "Signor, I was too weak to bear the yoke,

The golden yoke of thoughts too great for me;
 That was the ground of my infirmity.
 But now, I pray your grace to have belief
 That I shall soon be well, nor any more cause grief."

The king alone perceived the covert sense
 Of all her words, which made one evidence
 With her pure voice and candid loveliness,
 That he had lost much honor, honoring less
 That message of her passionate distress.
 He stayed beside her for a little while
 With gentle looks and speech, until a smile
 As placid as a ray of early morn
 On opening flower-cups o'er her lips was borne.
 When he had left her, and the tidings spread
 Through all the town how he had visited
 The Tuscan trader's daughter, who was sick,
 Men said, it was a royal deed and catholic.

And Lisa? she no longer wished for death;
 But as a poet, who sweet verses saith
 Within his soul, and joys in music there,
 Nor seeks another heaven, nor can bear
 Disturbing pleasures, so was she content,
 Breathing the life of grateful sentiment.
 She thought no maid betrothed could be more blest;
 For treasure must be valued by the test
 Of highest excellence and rarity,
 And her dear joy was best as best could be;
 There seemed no other crown to her delight
 Now the high loved one saw her love aright.
 Thus her soul thriving on that exquisite mood,
 Spread like the May-time all its beauteous good
 O'er the soft bloom of neck, and arms, and cheek,
 And strengthened the sweet body, once so weak,
 Until she rose and walked, and, like a bird
 With sweetly rippling throat, she made her spring joys heard.

The king, when he the happy change had seen,
 Trusted the ear of Constance, his fair queen,
 With Lisa's innocent secret, and conferred
 How they should jointly, by their deed and word,
 Honor this maiden's love, which, like the prayer
 Of loyal hermits, never thought to share
 In what it gave. The queen had that chief grace
 Of womanhood, a heart that can embrace
 All goodness in another woman's form;
 And that same day, ere the sun lay too warm
 On southern terraces, a messenger
 Informed Bernardo that the royal pair
 Would straightway visit him and celebrate
 Their gladness at his daughter's happier state,
 Which they were fain to see. Soon came the king
 On horseback, with his barons, heralding
 The advent of the queen in courtly state;
 And all, descending at the garden gate,
 Streamed with their feathers, velvet, and brocade,
 Through the pleached alleys, till they, pausing, made

A lake of splendor 'mid the aloes gray—
 Where, meekly facing all their proud array,
 The white-robed Lisa with her parents stood,
 As some white dove before the gorgeous brood
 Of dapple-breasted birds born by the Colchian flood.

The king and queen, by gracious looks and speech,
 Encourage her, and thus their courtiers teach
 How this fair morning they may courtliest be
 By making Lisa pass it happily.
 And soon the ladies and the barons all
 Draw her by turns, as at a festival
 Made for her sake, to easy, gay discourse,
 And compliment with looks and smiles enforce ;
 A joyous hum is heard the gardens round ;
 Soon there is Spanish dancing and the sound
 Of minstrel's song, and autumn fruits are plucked ;
 Till mindfully the king and queen conduct
 Lisa apart to where a trellised shade
 Made pleasant resting. Then King Pedro said—
 "Excellent maiden, that rich gift of love
 Your heart hath made us, hath a worth above
 All royal treasures, nor is fitly met
 Save when the grateful memory of deep debt
 Lies still behind the outward honors done :
 And as a sign that no oblivion
 Shall overflow that faithful memory,
 We while we live your cavalier will be,
 Nor will we ever arm ourselves for fight,
 Whether for struggle dire or brief delight
 Of warlike feigning, but we first will take
 The colors you ordain, and for your sake
 Charge the more bravely where your emblem is ;
 Nor will we ever claim an added bliss
 To our sweet thoughts of you save one sole kiss.
 But there still rests the outward honor meet
 To mark your worthiness, and we entreat
 That you will turn your ear to proffered vows
 Of one who loves you, and would be your spouse.
 We must not wrong yourself and Sicily
 By letting all your blooming years pass by
 Unmated: you will give the world its due
 From beauteous maiden and become a matron true."

Then Lisa, wrapt in virgin wonderment
 At her ambitious love's complete content,
 Which left no further good for her to seek
 Than love's obedience, said with accent meek—
 "Monsignor, I know well that were it known
 To all the world how high my love had flown,
 There would be few who would not deem me mad,
 Or say my mind the falsest image had
 Of my condition and your lofty place.
 But heaven has seen that for no moment's space
 Have I forgotten you to be the king,
 Or me myself to be a lowly thing—
 A little lark, enamoured of the sky,
 That soared to sing, to break its breast, and die.

But, as you better know than I, the heart
 In choosing chooseth not its own desert,
 But that great merit which attracteth it;
 'Tis law, I struggled, but I must submit,
 And having seen a worth all worth above,
 I loved you, love you, and shall always love.
 But that doth mean, my will is ever yours,
 Not only when your will my good insures,
 But if it wrought me what the world calls harm—
 Fire, wounds, would wear from your dear will a charm.
 That you will be my knight is full content,
 And for that kiss—I pray, first for the queen's consent."

Her answer, given with such firm gentleness,
 Pleased the queen well, and made her hold no less
 Of Lisa's merit than the king had held.
 And so, all cloudy threats of grief dispelled,
 There was betrothal made that very morn
 'Twixt Perdicone, youthful, brave, well-born,
 And Lisa, whom he loved; she loving well
 The lot that from obedience befell.
 The queen a rare betrothal ring on each
 Bestowed, and other gems, with gracious speech.
 And that no joy might lack, the king, who knew
 The youth was poor, gave him rich Ceffalû
 And Cataletta, large and fruitful lands—
 Adding much promise when he joined their hands.
 At last he said to Lisa, with an air
 Gallant yet noble: "Now we claim our share
 From your sweet love, a share which is not small:
 For in the sacrament one crumb is all."
 Then taking her small face his hands between,
 He kissed her on the brow with kiss serene,
 Fit seal to that pure vision her young soul had seen.

Sicilians witnessed that King Pedro kept
 His royal promise: Perdicone slept
 To many honors honorably won,
 Living with Lisa in true union.
 Throughout his life the king still took delight
 To call himself fair Lisa's faithful knight:
 And never wore in field or tournament
 A scarf or emblem save by Lisa sent.

Such deeds made subjects loyal in that land:
 They joyed that one so worthy to command,
 So chivalrous and gentle, had become
 The king of Sicily, and filled the room
 Of Frenchmen, who abused the Church's trust,
 Till, in a righteous vengeance on their lust,
 Messina rose, with God, and with the dagger's thrust.

L'ENVOI.

*Reader, this story pleased me long ago
 In the bright pages of Boccaccio,
 And where the author of a good we know,
 Let us not fail to pay the grateful thanks we owe.*

A MINOR PROPHET.

I HAVE a friend, a vegetarian seer,
By name Elias Baptist Butterworth,
A harmless bland, disinterested man,
Whose ancestors in Cromwell's day believed
The Second Advent certain in five years,
But when King Charles the Second came instead.
Revised their date and sought another world:
I mean—not heaven but—America.
A fervid stock, whose generous hope embraced
The fortunes of mankind, not stopping short
At rise of leather, or the fall of gold,
Nor listening to the voices of the time
As housewives listen to a cackling hen,
With wonder whether she has laid her egg
On their own nest-egg. Still they did insist
Somewhat too wearisomely on the joys
Of their Millennium, when coats and hats
Would all be of one pattern, books and songs
All fit for Sundays, and the casual talk
As good as sermons preached extempore.

And in Elias the ancestral zeal
Breathes strong as ever, only modified
By Transatlantic air and modern thought.
You could not pass him in the street and fail
To note his shoulders' long declivity,
Beard to the waist, swan-neck, and large pale eyes;
Or, when he lifts his hat, to mark his hair
Brushed back to show his great capacity—
A full grain's length at the angle of the brow
Proving him witty, while the shallower men
Only seem witty in their repartees.
Not that he's vain, but that his doctrine needs
The testimony of his frontal lobe.
On all points he adopts the latest views;
Takes for the key of universal Mind
The "levitation" of stout gentlemen;
Believes the Rappings are not spirits' work,
But the Thought-atmosphere's, a steam of brains
In correlated force of raps, as proved
By motion, heat, and science generally;
The spectrum, for example, which has shown
The self-same metals in the sun as here;
So the Thought-atmosphere is everywhere:
High truths that glimmered under other names

To ancient sages, whence good scholarship
 Applied to Eleusinian mysteries—
 The Vedas—Tripitaka—Vendidad—
 Might furnish weaker proof for weaker minds
 That Thought was rapping in the hoary past,
 And might have edified the Greeks by raps
 At the greater Dionysia, if their ears
 Had not been filled with Sophoclean verse.
 And when all Earth is vegetarian—
 When, lacking butchers, quadrupeds die out,
 And less Thought-atmosphere is reabsorbed
 By nerves of insects parasitical,
 Those higher truths, seized now by higher minds
 But not expressed (the insects hindering)
 Will either flash out into eloquence,
 Or better still, be comprehensible
 By rappings simply, without need of roots.

'Tis on this theme—the vegetarian world—
 That good Elias willingly expands :
 He loves to tell in mildly nasal tones
 And vowels stretched to suit the widest views,
 The future fortunes of our infant Earth—
 When it will be too full of human kind
 To have the room for wilder animals.
 Saith he, Sahara will be populous
 With families of gentlemen retired
 From commerce in more Central Africa,
 Who order coolness as we order coal,
 And have a lobe anterior strong enough
 To think away the sand-storms. Science thus
 Will leave no spot on this terraqueous globe
 Unfit to be inhabited by man,
 The chief of animals : all meaner brutes
 Will have been smoked and elbowed out of life.
 No lions then shall lap Caffrarian pools,
 Or shake the Atlas with their midnight roar :
 Even the slow, slime-loving crocodile,
 The last of animals to take a hint,
 Will then retire forever from a scene
 Where public feeling strongly sets against him.
 Fishes may lead carnivorous lives obscure,
 But must not dream of culinary rank
 Or being dished in good society.
 Imagination in that distant age,
 Aiming at fiction called historical,
 Will vainly try to reconstruct the times
 When it was men's preposterous delight
 To sit astride live horses, which consumed
 Materials for incalculable cakes ;
 When there were milkmaids who drew milk from cows
 With udders kept abnormal for that end
 Since the rude mythopœic period
 Of Aryan dairymen, who did not blush
 To call their milkmaid and their daughter one—
 Helplessly gazing at the Milky Way
 Nor dreaming of the astral cocoa-nuts

Quite at the service of posterity.
 'Tis to be feared, though, that the duller boys,
 Much given to anachronisms and nuts
 (Elias has confessed boys will be boys)
 May write a jockey for a centaur, think
 Europa's suitor was an Irish bull,
 Æsop a journalist who wrote up Fox,
 And Bruin a chief swindler upon 'Change.
 Boys will be boys, but dogs will all be moral,
 With longer alimentary canals
 Suited to diet vegetarian.
 The uglier breeds will fade from memory,
 Or, being palæontological,
 Live but as portraits in large learned books,
 Distasteful to the feelings of an age
 Nourished on purest beauty. Earth will hold
 No stupid brutes, no cheerful queernesses,
 No naïve cunning, grave absurdity.
 Wart-pigs with tender and parental grunts,
 Wombats much flattened as to their contour,
 Perhaps from too much crushing in the ark,
 But taking meekly that fatality;
 The serious cranes, unstung by ridicule;
 Long-headed, short-legged, solemn-looking curs,
 (Wise, silent critics of a flippant age);
 The silly, straddling foals, the weak-brained geese
 Hissing fallaciously at sound of wheels—
 All these rude products will have disappeared
 Along with every faulty human type.
 By dint of diet vegetarian
 All will be harmony of hue and line,
 Bodies and minds all perfect, limbs well-turned,
 And talk quite free from aught erroneous.

Thus far Elias in his seer's mantle:
 But at this climax in his prophecy
 My sinking spirits, fearing to be swamped,
 Urge me to speak. "High prospects these, my friend.
 Setting the weak carnivorous brain astretch;
 We will resume the thread another day."
 "To-morrow," cries Elias, "at this hour?"
 "No, not to-morrow—I shall have a cold—
 At least I feel some soreness—this endemic—
 Good-bye."

No tears are sadder than the smile
 With which I quit Elias. Bitterly
 I feel that every change upon this earth
 Is bought with sacrifice. My yearnings fail
 To reach that high apocalyptic mount
 Which shows in bird's-eye view a perfect world.
 Or enter warmly into other joys
 Than those of faulty, struggling human kind.
 That strain upon my soul's too feeble wing
 Ends in ignoble floundering: I fall
 Into short-sighted pity for the men
 Who living in those perfect future times
 Will not know half the dear imperfect things

That move my smiles and tears—will never know
 The fine old incongruities that raise
 My friendly laugh; the innocent conceits
 That like a needless eyeglass or black patch
 Give those who wear them harmless happiness:
 The twists and cracks in our poor earthenware,
 That touch me to more conscious fellowship
 (I am not myself the finest Parian)
 With my coevals. So poor Colin Clout,
 To whom raw onion gives prospective zest,
 Consoling hours of dampest wintry work,
 Could hardly fancy any regal joys
 Quite unimpregnate with the onion's scent:
 Perhaps his highest hopes are not all clear
 Of waftings from that energetic bulb;
 'Tis well that onion is not heresy.
 Speaking in parable, I am Colin Clout.
 A clinging flavor penetrates my life—
 My onion is imperfectness: I cleave
 To nature's blunders, evanescent types
 Which sages banish from Utopia.
 "Not worship beauty?" say you. Patience, friend!
 I worship in the temple with the rest;
 But by my hearth I keep a sacred nook
 For gnomes and dwarfs, duck-footed waddling elves
 Who stitched and hammered for the weary man
 In days of old. And in that piety
 I clothe ungainly forms inherited
 From toiling generations, daily bent
 At desk, or plough, or loom, or in the mine,
 In pioneering labors for the world.
 Nay, I am apt when floundering confused
 From too rash flight, to grasp at paradox,
 And pity future men who will not know
 A keen experience with pity blent,
 The pathos exquisite of lovely minds
 Hid in harsh forms—not penetrating them
 Like fire divine within a common bush
 Which glows transfigured by the heavenly guest,
 So that men put their shoes off; but encaged
 Like a sweet child within some thick-walled cell,
 Who leaps and fails to hold the window-bars,
 But having shown a little dimpled hand
 Is visited thenceforth by tender hearts
 Whose eyes keep watch about the prison walls.
 A foolish, nay, a wicked paradox!
 For purest pity is the eye of love
 Melting at sight of sorrow; and to grieve
 Because it sees no sorrow, shows a love
 Warped from its truer nature, turned to love
 Of merest habit, like the miser's greed.
 But I am Colin still: my prejudice
 Is for the flavor of my daily food.
 Not that I doubt the world is growing still
 As once it grew from Chaos and from Night;
 Or have a soul too shrunken for the hope
 Which dawned in human breasts, a double morn,

With earliest watchings of the rising light
 Chasing the darkness; and through many an age
 Has raised the vision of a future time
 That stands an Angel with a face all mild
 Spearing the demon. I too rest in faith
 That man's perfection is the crowning flower,
 Toward which the urgent sap in life's great tree
 Is pressing—seen in puny blossoms now,
 But in the world's great morrows to expand
 With broadest petal and with deepest glow.

Yet, see the patched and plodding citizen
 Waiting upon the pavement with the throng
 While some victorious world-hero makes
 Triumphant entry, and the peal of shouts
 And flash of faces 'neath uplifted hats
 Run like a storm of joy along the streets!
 He says, "God bless him!" almost with a sob,
 As the great hero passes; he is glad
 The world holds mighty men and mighty deeds;
 The music stirs his pulses like strong wine,
 The moving splendor touches him with awe—
 'Tis glory shed around the common weal,
 And he will pay his tribute willingly,
 Though with the pennies earned by sordid toil.
 Perhaps the hero's deeds have helped to bring
 A time when every honest citizen
 Shall wear a coat unpatched. And yet he feels
 More easy fellowship with neighbors there
 Who look on too; and he will soon relapse
 From noticing the banners and the steeds
 To think with pleasure there is just one bun
 Left in his pocket, that may serve to tempt
 The wide-eyed lad, whose weight is all too much
 For that young mother's arms: and then he falls
 To dreamy picturing of sunny days
 When he himself was a small big-cheeked lad
 In some far village where no heroes came,
 And stood a listener 'twixt his father's legs
 In the warm fire-light, while the old folk talked
 And shook their heads and looked upon the floor;
 And he was puzzled, thinking life was fine—
 The bread and cheese so nice all through the year
 And Christmas sure to come. Oh that good time!
 He, could he choose, would have those days again
 And see the dear old-fashioned things once more.
 But soon the wheels and drums have all passed by
 And tramping feet are heard like sudden rain:
 The quiet startles our good citizen;
 He feels the child upon his arms, and knows
 He is with the people making holiday
 Because of hopes for better days to come.
 But Hope to him was like the brilliant west
 Telling of sunrise in a world unknown,
 And from that dazzling curtain of bright hues
 He turned to the familiar face of fields
 Lying all clear in the calm morning land.

Maybe 'tis wiser not to fix a lens
 Too scrutinizing on the glorious times
 When Barbarossa shall arise and shake
 His mountain, good King Arthur come again,
 And all the heroes of such giant soul
 That, living once to cheer mankind with hope,
 They had to sleep until the time was ripe
 For greater deeds to match their greater thought.
 Yet no! the earth yields nothing more divine
 Than high prophetic vision—than the Seer
 Who fasting from man's meaner joy beholds
 The paths of beauteous order, and constructs
 A fairer type, to shame our low content.
 But prophecy is like potential sound
 Which turned to music seems a voice sublime
 From out the soul of light; but turns to noise
 In scannel pipes, and makes all ears averse.

The faith that life on earth is being shaped
 To glorious ends, that order, justice, love
 Mean man's completeness, mean effect as sure
 As roundness in the dew-drop—that great faith
 Is but the rushing and expanding stream
 Of thought, of feeling, fed by all the past.
 Our finest hope is finest memory,
 As they who love in age think youth is blest
 Because it has a life to fill with love.
 Full souls are double mirrors, making still
 An endless vista of fair things before
 Repeating things behind; so faith is strong
 Only when we are strong, shrinks when we shrink
 It comes when music stirs us, and the chords
 Moving on some grand climax shake our souls
 With influx new that makes new energies.
 It comes in swellings of the heart and tears
 That rise at noble and at gentle deeds—
 At labors of the master-artist's hand
 Which, trembling, touches to a finer end,
 Trembling before an image seen within.
 It comes in moments of heroic love,
 Unjealous joy in joy not made for us—
 In conscious triumph of the good within
 Making us worship goodness that rebukes.
 Even our failures are a prophecy,
 Even our yearnings and our bitter tears
 After that fair and true we cannot grasp;
 As patriots who seem to die in vain
 Make liberty more sacred by their pangs.

Presentiment of better things on earth
 Sweeps in with every force that stirs our souls
 To admiration, self-renouncing love,
 Or thoughts, like light, that bind the world in one
 Sweeps like the sense of vastness, when at night
 We hear the roll and dash of waves that break
 Nearer and nearer with the rushing tide,
 Which rises to the level of the cliff
 Because the wide Atlantic rolls behind
 Throbbing respondent to the far-off orbs.

BROTHER AND SISTER.

I.

I CANNOT choose but think upon the time
When our two lives grew like two buds that kiss
At lightest thrill from the bee's swinging chime,
Because the one so near the other is.

He was the elder and a little man
Of forty inches, bound to show no dread,
And I the girl that puppy-like now ran,
Now lagged behind my brother's larger tread.

I held him wise, and when he talked to me
Of snakes and birds, and which God loved the best,
I thought his knowledge marked the boundary
Where men grew blind, though angels knew the rest.

If he said "Hush!" I tried to hold my breath;
Wherever he said "Come!" I stepped in faith.

II.

Long years have left their writing on my brow,
But yet the freshness and the dew-fed beam
Of those young mornings are about me now,
When we two wandered toward the far-off stream

With rod and line. Our basket held a store
Baked for us only, and I thought with joy
That I should have my share, though he had more,
Because he was the elder and a boy.

The firmaments of daisies since to me
Have had those mornings in their opening eyes,
The bunchèd cowslip's pale transparency
Carries that sunshine of sweet memories,

And wild-rose branches take their finest scent
From those blest hours of infantine content.

III.

Our mother bade us keep the trodden ways,
Stroked down my tippet, set my brother's frill,
Then with the benediction of her gaze
Chung to us lessening, and pursued us still

Across the homestead to the rookery elms,
Whose tall old trunks had each a grassy mound,
So rich for us, we counted them as realms
With varied products: here were earth-nuts found,

And here the Lady-fingers in deep shade;
 Here sloping toward the Moat the rushes grew,
 The large to split for pith, the small to braid:
 While over all the dark rooks cawing flew,

And made a happy strange solemnity,
 A deep-toned chant from life unknown to me.

IV.

Our meadow-path had memorable spots:
 One where it bridged a tiny rivulet,
 Deep hid by tangled blue Forget-me-nots;
 And all along the waving grasses met

My little palm, or nodded to my cheek,
 When flowers with upturned faces gazing drew
 My wonder downward, seeming all to speak
 With eyes of souls that dumbly heard and knew.

Then came the copse, where wild things rushed unseen,
 And black-scathed grass betrayed the past abode
 Of mystic gypsies, who still lurked between
 Me and each hidden distance of the road.

A gypsy once had startled me at play,
 Blotting with her dark smile my sunny day.

V.

Thus rambling we were schooled in deepest lore,
 And learned the meanings that give words a soul,
 The fear, the love, the primal passionate store,
 Whose shaping impulses make manhood whole.

Those hours were seed to all my after good;
 My infant gladness, through eye, ear, and touch,
 Took easily as warmth a various food
 To nourish the sweet skill of loving much.

For who in age shall roam the earth and find
 Reasons for loving that will strike out love
 With sudden rod from the hard year-pressed mind?
 Were reasons sown as thick as stars above,

'Tis love must see them, as the eye sees light:
 Day is but Number to the darkened sight.

VI.

Our brown canal was endless to my thought;
 And on its banks I sat in dreamy peace,
 Unknowing how the good I loved was wrought,
 Untroubled by the fear that it would cease.

Slowly the barges floated into view
 Rounding a grassy hill to me sublime
 With some Unknown beyond it, whither flew
 The parting cuckoo toward a fresh spring time.

The wide-arched bridge, the scented elder-flowers,
 The wondrous watery rings that died too soon,
 The echoes of the quarry, the still hours
 With white robe sweeping-on the shadeless noon,

Were but my growing self, are part of me
 My present Past, my root of piety.

VII.

Those long days measured by my little feet
 Had chronicles which yield me many a text;
 Where irony still finds an image meet
 Of full-grown judgments in this world perplex.

One day my brother left me in high charge,
 To mind the rod, while he went seeking bait,
 And bade me, when I saw a nearing barge,
 Snatch out the line, lest he should come too late.

Proud of the task, I watched with all my might
 For one whole minute, till my eyes grew wide,
 Till sky and earth took on a strange new light
 And seemed a dream-world floating on some tide—

A fair pavilioned boat for me alone
 Bearing me onward through the vast unknown.

VIII.

But sudden came the barge's pitch-black prow,
 Nearer and angrier came my brother's cry,
 And all my soul was quivering fear, when lo!
 Upon the imperilled line, suspended high,

A silver perch! My guilt that won the prey,
 Now turned to merit, had a guerdon rich
 Of hugs and praises, and made merry play,
 Until my triumph reached its highest pitch

When all at home were told the wondrous feat,
 And how the little sister had fished well.
 In secret, though my fortune tasted sweet,
 I wondered why this happiness befell.

"The little lass had luck," the gardener said:
 And so I learned, luck was with glory wed.

IX.

We had the self-same world enlarged for each
 By loving difference of girl and boy:
 The fruit that hung on high beyond my reach
 He plucked for me, and oft he must employ

A measuring glance to guide my tiny shoe
 Where lay firm stepping-stones, or call to mind
 "This thing I like my sister may not do,
 For she is little, and I must be kind."

Thus boyish Will the nobler mastery learned
 Where inward vision over impulse reigns,
 Widening its life with separate life discerned,
 A Like unlike, a Self that self restrains.

His years with others must the sweeter be
 For those brief days he spent in loving me.

X.

His sorrow was my sorrow, and his joy
 Sent little leaps and laughs through all my frame;
 My doll seemed lifeless and no girlish toy
 Had any reason when my brother came.

I knelt with him at marbles, marked his fling
 Cut the ringed stem and make the apple drop,
 Or watched him winding close the spiral string
 That looped the orbits of the humming top.

Grasped by such fellowship my vagrant thought
 Ceased with dream-fruit dream-wishes to fulfil;
 My æry-picturing fantasy was taught
 Subjection to the harder, truer skill

That seeks with deeds to grave a thought-tracked line,
 And by "What is," "What will be" to define.

XI.

School parted us; we never found again
 That childish world where our two spirits mingled
 Like scents from varying roses that remain
 One sweetness, nor can evermore be singled.

Yet the twin habit of that early time
 Lingered for long about the heart and tongue:
 We had been natives of one happy clime,
 And its dear accent to our utterance clung.

Till the dire years whose awful name is Change
 Had grasped our souls still yearning in divorce,
 And pitiless shaped them in two forms that range
 Two elements which sever their life's course.

But were another childhood-world my share,
 I would be born a little sister there.

STRADIVARIUS.

YOUR soul was lifted by the wings to-day
Hearing the master of the violin:
You praised him, praised the great Sebastian too
Who made that fine Chaconne; but did you think
Of old Antonio Stradivari?—him
Who a good century and half ago
Put his true work in that brown instrument
And by the nice adjustment of its frame
Gave it responsive life, continuous
With the master's finger-tips and perfected
Like them by delicate rectitude of use.
Not Bach alone, helped by fine precedent
Of genius gone before, nor Joachim
Who holds the strain afresh incorporate
By inward hearing and notation strict
Of nerve and muscle, made our joy to-day:
Another soul was living in the air
And swaying it to true deliverance
Of high invention and responsive skill—
That plain white-aproned man who stood at work
Patient and accurate full fourscore years,
Cherished his sight and touch by temperance,
And since keen sense is love of perfectness
Made perfect violins, the needed paths
For inspiration and high mastery.

No simpler man than he: he never cried,
"Why was I born to this monotonous task
Of making violins?" or flung them down
To suit with hurling act a well-hurled curse
At labor on such perishable stuff.
Hence neighbors in Cremona held him dull,
Called him a slave, a mill-horse, a machine,
Begged him to tell his motives or to lend
A few gold pieces to a loftier mind.
Yet he had pithy words full fed by fact;
For Fact, well-trusted, reasons and persuades,
Is gnomic, cutting, or ironical,
Draws tears, or is a tocsin to arouse—
Can hold all figures of the orator
In one plain sentence; has her pauses too—
Eloquent silence at the chasm abrupt
Where knowledge ceases. Thus Antonio
Made answers as Fact willed, and made them strong.

Naldo, a painter of eclectic school,
Taking his dicers, candlelight, and grins

From Caravaggio, and in holier groups
 Combining Flemish flesh with martyrdom—
 Knowing all tricks of style at thirty-one,
 And weary of them, while Antonio
 At sixty-nine wrought placidly his best
 Making the violin you heard to-day—
 Naldo would tease him oft to tell his aims.
 "Perhaps thou hast some pleasant vice to feed—
 The love of louis d'ors in heaps of four,
 Each violin a heap—I've nought to blame;
 My vices waste such heaps. But then, why work
 With painful nicety? Since fame once earned
 By luck or merit—oftenest by luck—
 (Else why do I put Bonifazio's name
 To work that '*pinxit Naldo*' would not sell?)
 Is welcome index to the wealthy mob
 Where they should pay their gold, and where they pay
 There they find merit—take your tow for flax,
 And hold the flax unlabelled with your name,
 Too coarse for sufferance."

Antonio then:

"I like the gold—well, yes—but not for meals.
 And as my stomach, so my eye and hand,
 And inward sense that works along with both,
 Have hunger that can never feed on coin.
 Who draws a line and satisfies his soul,
 Making it crooked where it should be straight?
 An idiot with an oyster-shell may draw
 His lines along the sand, all wavering,
 Fixing no point or pathway to a point;
 An idiot one remove may choose his line,
 Straggle and be content; but God be praised,
 Antonio Stradivari has an eye
 That winces at false work and loves the true,
 With hand and arm that play upon the tool
 As willingly as any singing bird
 Sets him to sing his morning roundelay,
 Because he likes to sing and likes the song."

Then Naldo: "'Tis a petty kind of fame
 At best, that comes of making violins;
 And saves no masses, either. Thou wilt go
 To purgatory none the less."

But he:

"'Twere purgatory here to make them ill;
 And for my fame—when any master holds
 'Twixt chin and hand a violin of mine,
 He will be glad that Stradivari lived,
 Made violins, and made them of the best.
 The masters only know whose work is good:
 They will choose mine, and while God gives them skill
 I give them instruments to play upon,
 God choosing me to help Him."

"What! were God
 At fault for violins, thou absent?"

"Yes;
 He were at fault for Stradivari's work."

"Why, many hold Giuseppe's violins
As good as thine."

"May be: they are different.
His quality declines: he spoils his hand
With over-drinking. But were his the best,
He could not work for two. My work is mine,
And, heresy or not, if my hand slack'd
I should rob God—since He is fullest good—
Leaving a blank instead of violins.
I say, not God himself can make man's best
Without best men to help Him. I am one best
Here in Cremona, using sunlight well
To fashion finest maple till it serves
More cunningly than throats, for harmony.
'Tis rare delight: I would not change my skill
To be the Emperor with bungling hands,
And lose my work, which comes as natural
As self at waking."

"Thou art little more
Than a deft potter's wheel, Antonio;
Turning out work by mere necessity
And lack of varied function. Higher arts
Subsist on freedom—eccentricity—
Uncounted inspirations—influence
That comes with drinking, gambling, talk turned wild,
Then moody misery and lack of food—
With every dithyrambic fine excess:
These make at last a storm which flashes out
In lightning revelations. Steady work
Turns genius to a loom; the soul must lie
Like grapes beneath the sun till ripeness comes
And mellow vintage. I could paint you now
The finest Crucifixion; yesternight
Returning home I saw it on a sky
Blue-black, thick-starred. I want two louis d'ors
To buy the canvas and the costly blues—
Trust me a fortnight."

"Where are those last two
I lent thee for thy Judith?—her thou saw'st
In saffron gown, with Holofernes' head
And beauty all complete?"

"She is but sketched:
I lack the proper model—and the mood.
A great idea is an eagle's egg,
Craves time for hatching; while the eagle sits
Feed her."

"If thou wilt call thy pictures eggs
I call the hatching, Work. 'Tis God gives skill,
But not without men's hands: He could not make
Antonio Stradivari's violins
Without Antonio. Get thee to thy easel."

A COLLEGE BREAKFAST-PARTY.

YOUNG Hamlet, not the hesitating Dane,
But one named after him, who lately strove
For honors at our English Wittenberg—
Blond, metaphysical, and sensuous,
Questioning all things and yet half convinced
Credulity were better; held inert
'Twixt fascinations of all opposites,
And half suspecting that the mightiest soul
(Perhaps his own?) was union of extremes,
Having no choice but choice of everything:
As, drinking deep to-day for love of wine,
To-morrow half a Brahmin, scorning life
As mere illusion, yearning for that True
Which has no qualities; another day
Finding the fount of grace in sacraments,
And purest reflex of the light divine
In gem-bossed pyx and brodered chasuble,
Resolved to wear no stockings and to fast
With arms extended, waiting ecstacy;
But getting cramps instead, and needing change,
A would-be pagan next:—

Young Hamlet sat

A guest with five of somewhat riper age
At breakfast with Horatio, a friend
With few opinions, but of faithful heart,
Quick to detect the fibrous spreading roots
Of character that feed men's theories,
Yet cloaking weaknesses with charity
And ready in all service save rebuke.

With ebb of breakfast and the cider-cup
Came high debate: the others seated there
Were Osric, spinner of fine sentences,
A delicate insect creeping over life
Feeding on molecules of floral breath,
And weaving gossamer to trap the sun;
Laertes, ardent, rash, and radical;
Discursive Rosencranz, grave Guildenstern,
And he for whom the social meal was made—
The polished priest, a tolerant listener,
Disposed to give a hearing to the lost,
And breakfast with them ere they went below.

From alpine metaphysic glaciers first
The talk sprang copious; the themes were old,
But so is human breath, so infant eyes,

The daily nurslings of creative light.
 Small words held mighty meanings: Matter, Force,
 Self, Not-self, Being, Seeming, Space, and Time—
 Plebeian toilers on the dusty road
 Of daily traffic, turned to Genii
 And cloudy giants darkening sun and moon.
 Creation was reversed in human talk:
 None said, "Let Darkness be," but Darkness was;
 And in it weltered with Teutonic ease,
 An argumentative Leviathan,
 Blowing cascades from out his element,
 The thunderous Rosencranz, till

"Truce, I beg!"

Said Osric, with nice accent. "I abhor
 That battling of the ghosts, that strife of terms
 For utmost lack of color, form, and breath,
 That tasteless squabbling called Philosophy:
 As if a blue-winged butterfly afloat
 For just three days above the Italian fields,
 Instead of sipping at the heart of flowers,
 Poising in sunshine, fluttering towards its bride,
 Should fast and speculate, considering
 What were if it were not? or what now is
 Instead of that which seems to be itself?
 Its deepest wisdom surely were to be
 A sipping, marrying, blue-winged butterfly;
 Since utmost speculation on itself
 Were but a three days' living of worse sort—
 A bruising struggle all within the bounds
 Of butterfly existence."

"I protest,"

Burst in Laertes, "against arguments
 That start with calling me a butterfly,
 A bubble, spark, or other metaphor
 Which carries your conclusions as a phrase
 In quibbling law will carry property.
 Put a thin sucker for my human lips
 Fed at a mother's breast, who now needs food
 That I will earn for her; put bubbles blown
 From frothy thinking, for the joy, the love,
 The wants, the pity, and the fellowship
 (The ocean deeps I might say, were I bent
 On bandying metaphors) that make a man—
 Why, rhetoric brings within your easy reach
 Conclusions worthy of—a butterfly.
 The universe, I hold, is no charade,
 No acted pun unriddled by a word,
 Nor pain a decimal diminishing
 With hocus-pocus of a dot or nought.
 For those who know it, pain is solely pain:
 Not any letters of the alphabet
 Wrought syllogistically pattern-wise,
 Nor any cluster of fine images,
 Nor any missing of their figured dance
 By blundering molecules. Analysis
 May show you the right physic for the ill,
 Teaching the molecules to find their dance,

But spare me your analogies, that hold
Such insight as the figure of a crow
And bar of music put to signify
A crowbar."

Said the Priest, "There I agree—
Would add that sacramental grace is grace
Which to be known must first be felt, with all
The strengthening influxes that come by prayer.
I note this passingly—would not delay
The conversation's tenor, save to hint
That taking stand with Rosencranz one sees
Final equivalence of all we name
Our Good and Ill—their difference meanwhile
Being inborn prejudice that plumps you down
An Ego, brings a weight into your scale
Forcing a standard. That resistless weight
Obstinate, irremovable by thought,
Persisting through disproof, an ache, a need
That spaceless stays where sharp analysis
Has shown a plenum filled without it—what
If this, to use your phrase, were just that Being
Not looking solely, grasping from the dark,
Weighing the difference you call Ego? This
Gives you persistence, regulates the flux
With strict relation rooted in the All.
Who is he of your late philosophers
Takes the true name of Being to be Will?
I—nay, the Church objects nought, is content:
Reason has reached its utmost negative,
Physic and metaphysic meet in the inane
And backward shrink to intense prejudice,
Making their absolute and homogene
A loaded relative, a choice to be
Whatever is—supposed: a What is not.
The Church demands no more, has standing room
And basis for her doctrine: this (no more)—
That the strong bias which we name the Soul,
Though fed and clad by dissoluble waves,
Has antecedent quality, and rules
By veto or consent the strife of thought,
Making arbitrament that we call faith."

Here was brief silence, till young Hamlet spoke.
"I crave direction, Father, how to know
The sign of that imperative whose right
To sway my act in face of thronging doubts
Were an oracular gem in price beyond
Urim and Thummim lost to Israel.
That bias of the soul, that conquering die
Loaded with golden emphasis of Will—
How find it where resolve, once made, becomes
The rash exclusion of an opposite
Which draws the stronger as I turn aloof."

"I think I hear a bias in your words,"
The Priest said mildly,—"that strong natural bent
Which we call hunger. What more positive
Than appetite?—of spirit or of flesh,

I care not—'sense of need' were truer phrase.
 You hunger for authoritative right,
 And yet discern no difference of tones,
 No weight of rod that marks imperial rule?
 Laertes granting, I will put your case
 In analogic form: the doctors hold
 Hunger which gives no relish—save caprice
 That tasting venison fancies mellow pears—
 A symptom of disorder, and prescribe
 Strict discipline. Were I physician here
 I would prescribe that exercise of soul
 Which lies in full obedience: you ask,
 Obedience to what? The answer lies
 Within the word itself; for how obey
 What has no rule, asserts no absolute claim?
 Take inclination, taste—why, that is you,
 No rule above you. Science, reasoning
 On nature's order—they exist and move
 Solely by disputation, hold no pledge
 Of final consequence, but push the swing
 Where Epicurus and the Stoic sit
 In endless see-saw. One authority,
 And only one, says simply this, Obey:
 Place yourself in that current (test it so!)
 Of spiritual order where at least
 Lies promise of a high communion,
 A Head informing members, Life that breathes
 With gift of forces over and above
 The *plus* of arithmetic interchange.
 'The Church too has a body,' you object,
 'Can be dissected, put beneath the lens
 And shown the merest continuity
 Of all existence else beneath the sun.'
 I grant you; but the lens will not disprove
 A presence which eludes it. Take your wit,
 Your highest passion, widest-reaching thought:
 Show their conditions if you will or can,
 But though you saw the final atom-dance
 Making each molecule that stands for sign
 Of love being present, where is still your love?
 How measure that, how certify its weight?
 And so I say, the body of the Church
 Carries a Presence, promises and gifts
 Never disproved—whose argument is found
 In lasting failure of the search elsewhere
 For what it holds to satisfy man's need.
 But I grow lengthy: my excuse must be
 Your question, Hamlet, which has probed right through
 To the pith of our belief. And I have robbed
 Myself of pleasure as a listener.
 'Tis noon, I see; and my appointment stands
 For half-past twelve with Voltimand. Good-bye."

Brief parting, brief regret—sincere, but quenched
 In fumes of best Havannah, which consoles
 For lack of other certitude. Then said,
 Mildly sarcastic, quiet Guildenstern:

"I marvel how the Father gave new charm
To weak conclusions : I was half convinced
The poorest reasoner made the finest man,
And held his logic lovelier for its limp."

"I fain would hear," said Hamlet, "how you find
A stronger footing than the Father gave.
How base your self-resistance save on faith
In some invisible Order, higher Right
Than changing impulse. What does Reason bid?
To take a fullest rationality
What offers best solution: so the Church.
Science, detecting hydrogen aflame
Outside our firmament, leaves mystery
Whole and untouched beyond; nay, in our blood
And in the potent atoms of each germ
The Secret lives—envelops, penetrates
Whatever sense perceives or thought divines.
Science, whose soul is explanation, halts
With hostile front at mystery. The Church
Takes mystery as her empire, brings its wealth
Of possibility to fill the void
'Twixt contradictions—warrants so a faith "
Defying sense and all its ruthless train
Of arrogant 'Therefore.' Science with her lens
Dissolves the Forms that made the other half
Of all our love, which thenceforth widowed lives
To gaze with maniac stare at what is not.
The Church explains not, governs—feeds resolve
By vision fraught with heart-experience
And human yearning."

"Ay," said Guildenstern,
With friendly nod, "the Father, I can see,
Has caught you up in his air-chariot.
His thought takes rainbow-bridges, out of reach
By solid obstacles, evaporates
The coarse and common into subtilties,
Insists that what is real in the Church
Is something out of evidence, and begs
(Just in parenthesis) you'll never mind
What stares you in the face and bruises you.
Why, by his method I could justify
Each superstition and each tyranny
That ever rode upon the back of man,
Pretending fitness for his sole defence
Against life's evil. How can aught subsist
That holds no theory of gain or good?
Despots with terror in their red right hand
Must argue good to helpers and themselves,
Must let submission hold a core of gain
To make their slaves choose life. Their theory,
Abstracting inconvenience of racks,
Whip-lashes, dragoonades and all things coarse
Inherent in the fact or concrete mass,
Presents the pure idea—utmost good
Secured by Order only to be found
In strict subordination, hierarchy

Of forces where, by nature's law, the strong
 Has rightful empire, rule of weaker proved
 Mere dissolution. What can you object?
 The Inquisition—if you turn away
 From narrow notice how the scent of gold
 Has guided sense of damning heresy—
 The Inquisition is sublime, is love
 Hindering the spread of poison in men's souls:
 The flames are nothing: only smaller pain
 To hinder greater, or the pain of one
 To save the many, such as throbs at heart
 Of every system born into the world.
 So of the Church as high communion
 Of Head with members, fount of spirit force
 Beyond the calculus, and carrying proof
 In her sole power to satisfy man's need:
 That seems ideal truth as clear as lines
 That, necessary though invisible, trace
 The balance of the planets and the sun—
 Until I find a hitch in that last claim.
 'To satisfy man's need.' Sir, that depends:
 We settle first the measure of man's need
 Before we grant capacity to fill.
 John, James, or Thomas, you may satisfy:
 But since you choose ideals I demand
 Your Church shall satisfy ideal man,
 His utmost reason and his utmost love.
 And say these rest a-hungered—find no scheme
 Content them both, but hold the world accursed,
 A Calvary where Reason mocks at Love,
 And Love forsaken sends out orphan cries
 Hopeless of answer; still the soul remains
 Larger, diviner than your half-way Church,
 Which racks your reason into false consent,
 And soothes your Love with sops of selfishness."

"There I am with you," cried Laertes. "What
 To me are any dictates, though they came
 With thunders from the Mount, if still within
 I see a higher Right, a higher Good
 Compelling love and worship? Though the earth
 Held force electric to discern and kill
 Each thinking rebel—what is martyrdom
 But death-defying utterance of belief,
 Which being mine remains my truth supreme
 Though solitary as the throb of pain
 Lying outside the pulses of the world?
 Obedience is good: ay, but to what?
 And for what ends? For say that I rebel
 Against your rule as devilish, or as rule
 Of thunder-guiding powers that deny
 Man's highest benefit: rebellion then
 Were strict obedience to another rule
 Which bids me flout your thunder."

"Lo you now!"

Said Osric, delicately, "how you come,
 Laertes mine, with all your warring zeal

As Python-slayer of the present age—
 Cleansing all social swamps by darting rays
 Of dubious doctrine, hot with energy
 Of private judgment and disgust for doubt—
 To state my thesis, which you most abhor
 When sung in Daphnis-notes beneath the pines
 To gentle rush of waters. Your belief—
 In essence what is it but simply Taste?
 I urge with you exemption from all claims
 That come from other than my proper will,
 An Ultimate within to balance yours,
 A solid meeting you, excluding you,
 Till you show fuller force by entering
 My spiritual space and crushing Me
 To a subordinate complement of You:
 Such Ultimate must stand alike for all.
 Preach your crusade, then: all will join who like
 The hurly-burly of aggressive creeds;
 Still your unpleasant Ought, your itch to choose
 What grates upon the sense, is simply Taste,
 Differs, I think, from mine (permit the word,
 Discussion forces it) in being bad."

The tone was too polite to breed offence,
 Showing a tolerance of what was "bad"
 Becoming courtiers. Louder Rosencranz
 Took up the ball with rougher movement, wont
 To show contempt for doting reasoners
 Who hugged some reasons with a preference,
 As warm Laertes did: he gave five puffs
 Intolerantly sceptical, then said,
 "Your human Good, which you would make supreme,
 How do you know it? Has it shown its face
 In adamant type, with features clear,
 As this republic, or that monarchy?
 As federal grouping, or municipal?
 Equality, or finely shaded lines
 Of social difference? ecstatic whirl
 And draught intense of passionate joy and pain,
 Or sober self-control that starves its youth
 And lives to wonder what the world calls joy?
 Is it in sympathy that shares men's pangs
 Or in cool brains that can explain them well?
 Is it in labor or in laziness?
 In training for the tug of rivalry
 To be admired, or in the admiring soul?
 In risk or certitude? In battling rage
 And hardy challenges of Protean luck,
 Or in a sleek and rural apathy
 Full fed with sameness? Pray define your Good
 Beyond rejection by majority;
 Next, how it may subsist without the Ill
 Which seems its only outline. Show a world
 Of pleasure not resisted; or a world
 Of pressure equalized, yet various
 In action formative; for that will serve
 As illustration of your human Good—

Which at its perfecting (your goal of hope)
 Will not be straight extinct, or fall to sleep
 In the deep bosom of the Unchangeable.
 What will you work for, then, and call it good
 With full and certain vision—good for aught
 Save partial ends which happen to be yours?
 How will you get your stringency to bind
 Thought or desire in demonstrated tracks
 Which are but waves within a balanced whole?
 Is 'Relative' the magic word that turns
 Your flux mercurial of good to gold?
 Why, that analysis at which you rage
 As anti-social force that sweeps you down
 The world in one cascade of molecules,
 Is brother 'Relative'—and grins at you
 Like any convict whom you thought to send
 Outside society, till this enlarged
 And meant New England and Australia too.
 The Absolute is your shadow, and the space
 Which you say might be real were you milled
 To curves pellicular, the thinnest thin,
 Equation of no thickness, is still you."

"Abstracting all that makes him clubbable,"
 Horatio interposed. But Rosencranz,
 Deaf as the angry turkey-cock whose ears
 Are plugged by swollen tissues when he scolds
 At men's pretensions: "Pooh, your 'Relative'
 Shuts you in, hopeless, with your progeny
 As in a Hunger-tower; your social Good,
 Like other deities by turn supreme,
 Is transient reflex of a prejudice,
 Anthology of causes and effects
 To suit the mood of fanatics who lead
 The mood of tribes or nations. I admit
 If you could show a sword, nay, chance of sword
 Hanging conspicuous to their inward eyes
 With edge so constant threatening as to sway
 All greed and lust by terror; and a law
 Clear-writ and proven as the law supreme
 Which that dread sword enforces—then your Right,
 Duty, or social Good, were it once brought
 To common measure with the potent law,
 Would dip the scale, would put unchanging marks
 Of wisdom or of folly on each deed,
 And warrant exhortation. Until then,
 Where is your standard or criterion?
 'What always, everywhere, by all men'—why,
 That were but Custom, and your system needs
 Ideals never yet incorporate,
 The imminent doom of Custom. Can you find
 Appeal beyond the sentience in each man?
 Frighten the blind with scarecrows? raise an awe
 Of things unseen where appetite commands
 Chambers of imagery in the soul
 At all its avenues?—You chant your hymns
 To Evolution, on your altar lay

A sacred egg called Progress: have you proved
 A Best unique where all is relative,
 And where each change is loss as well as gain?
 The age of healthy Saurians, well supplied
 With heat and prey, will balance well enough
 A human age where maladies are strong
 And pleasures feeble; wealth a monster gorged
 Mid hungry populations; intellect
 Aproned in laboratories, bent on proof
 That *this* is *that* and both are good for nought
 Save feeding error through a weary life;
 While Art and Poesy struggle like poor ghosts
 To hinder cock-crow and the dreadful light,
 Lurking in darkness and the charnel-house,
 Or like two stalwart greybeards, imbecile,
 With limbs still active, playing at belief
 That hunt the slipper, foot-ball, hide-and-seek,
 Are sweetly merry, donning pinafores
 And lisping emulously in their speech.
 O human race! Is this then all thy gain?—
 Working at disproof, playing at belief,
 Debate on causes, distaste of effects,
 Power to transmute all elements, and lack
 Of any power to sway the fatal skill
 And make thy lot aught else than rigid doom?
 The Saurians were better.—Guilkenstern,
 Pass me the taper. Still the human curse
 Has mitigation in the best cigars.”

Then swift Laertes, not without a glare
 Of leonine wrath, “I thank thee for that word:
 That one confession, were I Socrates,
 Should force you onward till you ran your head
 At your own image—flatly gave the lie
 To all your blasphemy of that human Good
 Which bred and nourished you to sit at ease
 And learnedly deny it. Say the world
 Groans ever with the pangs of doubtful births:
 Say, life’s a poor donation at the best—
 Wisdom a yearning after nothingness—
 Nature’s great vision and the thrill supreme
 Of thought-fed passion but a weary play—
 I argue not against you. Who can prove
 Wit to be witty when with deeper ground
 Dulness intuitive declares wit dull?
 If life is worthless to you—why, it is.
 You only know how little love you feel
 To give you fellowship, how little force
 Responsive to the quality of things.
 Then end your life, throw off the unsought yoke.
 If not—if you remain to taste cigars,
 Choose racy diction, perorate at large
 With tacit scorn of meaner men who win
 No wreath or tripos—then admit at least
 A possible Better in the seeds of earth;
 Acknowledge debt to that laborious life
 Which, sifting evermore the mingled seeds,

Testing the Possible with patient skill,
 And daring Ill in presence of a Good
 For futures to inherit, made your lot
 One you would choose rather than end it, nay,
 Rather than, say, some twenty million lots
 Of fellow-Britons toiling all to make
 That nation, that community, whereon
 You feed and thrive and talk philosophy.
 I am no optimist whose faith must hang
 On hard pretence that pain is beautiful
 And agony explained for men at ease
 By virtue's exercise in pitying it.
 But this I hold: that he who takes one gift
 Made for him by the hopeful work of man,
 Who tastes sweet bread, walks where he will unarmed,
 His shield and warrant the invisible law,
 Who owns a hearth and household charities,
 Who clothes his body and his sentient soul
 With skill and thoughts of men, and yet denies
 A human Good worth toiling for, is cursed
 With worse negation than the poet feigned
 In Mephistopheles. The Devil spins
 His wire-drawn argument against all good
 With sense of brimstone as his private lot,
 And never drew a solace from the Earth."

Laertes fuming paused, and Guildenstern
 Took up with cooler skill the fusillade:
 "I meet your deadliest challenge, Rosencranz:—
 Where get, you say, a binding law, a rule
 Enforced by sanction, an Ideal throned
 With thunder in its hand? I answer, there
 Whence every faith and rule has drawn its force
 Since human consciousness awaking owned
 An Outward, whose unconquerable sway
 Resisted first and then subdued desire
 By pressure of the dire Impossible
 Urging to possible ends the active soul
 And shaping so its terror and its love.
 Why, you have said it—threats and promises
 Depend on each man's sentience for their force:
 All sacred rules, imagined or revealed,
 Can have no form or potency apart
 From the percipient and emotive mind.
 God, duty, love, submission, fellowship,
 Must first be framed in man, as music is,
 Before they live outside him as a law.
 And still they grow and shape themselves anew,
 With fuller concentration in their life
 Of inward and of outward energies
 Blending to make the last result called Man,
 Which means, not this or that philosopher
 Looking through beauty into blankness, not
 The swindler who has sent his fruitful lie
 By the last telegram: it means the tide
 Of needs reciprocal, toil, trust, and love—
 The surging multitude of human claims

Which make 'a presence not to be put by'
 Above the horizon of the general soul.
 Is inward Reason shrunk to subtleties,
 And inward wisdom pining passion-starved?—
 The outward Reason has the world in store,
 Regenerates passion with the stress of want,
 Regenerates knowledge with discovery,
 Shows sly rapacious Self a blunderer,
 Widens dependence, knits the social whole
 In sensible relation more defined.
 Do Boards and dirty-handed millionaires
 Govern the planetary system?—sway
 The pressure of the Universe?—decide
 That man henceforth shall retrogress to ape,
 Emptied of every sympathetic thrill
 The All has wrought in him? dam up henceforth
 The flood of human claims as private force
 To turn their wheels and make a private hell
 For fish-pond to their mercantile domain?
 What are they but a parasitic growth
 On the vast real and ideal world
 Of man and nature blent in one divine?
 Why, take your closing dirge—say evil grows
 And good is dwindling; science mere decay,
 Mere dissolution of ideal wholes
 Which through the ages past alone have made
 The earth and firmament of human faith;
 Say, the small arc of Being we call man
 Is near its mergence, what seems growing life
 Nought but a hurrying change towards lower types,
 The ready rankness of degeneracy.
 Well, they who mourn for the world's dying good
 May take their common sorrows for a rock,
 On it erect religion and a church,
 A worship, rites, and passionate piety—
 The worship of the Best though crucified
 And God-forsaken in its dying pangs;
 The sacramental rites of fellowship
 In common woe; visions that purify
 Through admiration and despairing love
 Which keep their spiritual life intact
 Beneath the murderous clutches of disproof
 And feed a martyr-strength."

"Religion high!"

(Rosencranz here) "but with communicants
 Few as the cedars upon Lebanon—
 A child might count them. What the world demands
 Is faith coercive of the multitude."

"Tush, Guildenstern, you granted him too much,"
 Burst in Laertes; "I will never grant
 One inch of law to feeble blasphemies
 Which hold no higher ratio to life—
 Full vigorous human life that peopled earth
 And wrought and fought and loved and bravely died—
 Than the sick morning glooms of debauchees.
 Old nations breed old children, wizened babes

Whose youth is languid and incredulous,
 Weary of life without the will to die ;
 Their passions visionary appetites
 Of bloodless spectres wailing that the world
 For lack of substance slips from out their grasp ;
 Their thoughts the withered husks of all things dead,
 Holding no force of germs instinct with life,
 Which never hesitates but moves and grows.
 Yet hear them boast in screams their godlike ill,
 Excess of knowing ! Fie on you, Rosencranz !
 You lend your brains and fine-dividing tongue
 For bass-notes to this shrivelled crudity,
 This immature decrepitude that strains
 To fill our ears and claim the prize of strength
 For mere unmanliness. Out on them all !—
 Wits, puling minstrels, and philosophers,
 Who living softly prate of suicide,
 And suck the commonwealth to feed their ease
 While they vent epigrams and threnodies,
 Mocking or wailing all the eager work
 Which makes that public store whereon they feed.
 Is wisdom flattened sense and mere distaste ?
 Why, any superstition warm with love,
 Inspired with purpose, wild with energy
 That streams resistless through its ready frame,
 Has more of human truth within its life
 Than souls that look through color into nought,—
 Whose brain, too unimpassioned for delight,
 Has feeble ticklings of a vanity
 Which finds the universe beneath its mark,
 And scorning the blue heavens as merely blue
 Can only say, 'What then ?'—pre-eminent
 In wondrous want of likeness to their kind,
 Founding that worship of sterility
 Whose one supreme is vacillating Will
 Which makes the Light, then says, 'Twere better not.

Here rash Laertes brought his Handel-strain
 As of some angry Polypheme, to pause ;
 And Osric, shocked at ardors out of taste,
 Relieved the audience with a tenor voice
 And delicate delivery.

“For me,
 I range myself in line with Rosencranz
 Against all schemes, religious or profane,
 That flaunt a Good as pretext for a lash
 To flog us all who have the better taste,
 Into conformity, requiring me
 At peril of the thong and sharp disgrace
 To care how mere Philistines pass their lives ;
 Whether the English pauper-total grows
 From one to two before the noughts ; how far
 Teuton will outbreed Roman ; if the class
 Of proletaires will make a federal band
 To bind all Europe and America,
 Throw, in their wrestling, every government,
 Snatch the world's purse and keep the guillotine :

Or else (admitting these are casualties)
 Driving my soul with scientific hail
 That shuts the landscape out with particles;
 Insisting that the Palingenesis
 Means telegraphs and measure of the rate
 At which the stars move—nobody knows where.
 So far, my Rosencranz, we are at one.
 But not when you blaspheme the life of Art,
 The sweet perennial youth of Poesy,
 Which asks no logic but its sensuous growth,
 No right but loveliness; which fearless strolls
 Betwixt the burning mountain and the sea,
 Reckless of earthquake and the lava stream,
 Filling its hour with beauty. It knows nought
 Of bitter strife, denial, grim resolve,
 Sour resignation, busy emphasis,
 Of fresh illusions named the new-born True,
 Old Error's latest child; but as a lake
 Images all things, yet within its depths
 Dreams them all lovelier—thrills with sound,
 And makes a harp of plenteous liquid chords—
 So Art or Poesy: we its votaries
 Are the Olympians, fortunately born
 From the elemental mixture; 'tis our lot
 To pass more swiftly than the Delian God,
 But still the earth breaks into flowers for us,
 And mortal sorrows when they reach our ears
 Are dying falls to melody divine.
 Hatred, war, vice, crime, sin, those human storms,
 Cyclones, floods, what you will—outbursts of force—
 Feed Art with contrast, give the grander touch
 To the master's pencil and the poet's song,
 Serve as Vesuvian fires or navies tossed
 On yawning waters, which when viewed afar
 Deepen the calm sublime of those choice souls
 Who keep the heights of poesy and turn
 A fleckless mirror to the various world,
 Giving its many-named and fitful flux
 An imaged, harmless, spiritual life,
 With pure selection, native to Art's frame,
 Of beauty only, save its minor scale
 Of ill and pain to give the ideal joy
 A keener edge. This is a mongrel globe;
 All finer being wrought from its coarse earth
 Is but accepted privilege: what else
 Your boasted virtue, which proclaims itself
 A good above the average consciousness?
 Nature exists by partiality
 (Each planet's poise must carry two extremes
 With verging breadths of minor wretchedness):
 We are her favorites and accept our wings.
 For your accusal, Rosencranz, that Art
 Shares in the dread and weakness of the time,
 I hold it null; since Art or Poesy pure,
 Being blameless by all standards save her own,
 Takes no account of modern or antique
 In morals, science, or philosophy:

No dull elenchus makes a yoke for her,
Whose law and measure are the sweet consent
Of sensibilities that move apart
From rise or fall of systems, states or creeds—
Apart from what Philistines call man's weal."

"Ay, we all know those votaries of the Muse
Ravished with singing till they quite forgot
Their manhood, sang, and gaped, and took no food,
Then died of emptiness, and for reward
Lived on as grasshoppers"—Laertes thus:
But then he checked himself as one who feels
His muscles dangerous, and Guildenstern
Filled up the pause with calmer confidence.

"You use your wings, my Osric, poise yourself
Safely outside all reach of argument,
Then dogmatize at will (a method known
To ancient women and philosophers,
Nay, to Philistines whom you most abhor);
Else, could an arrow reach you, I should ask
Whence came taste, beauty, sensibilities
Refined to preference infallible?
Doubtless, ye're gods—these odors ye inhale,
A sacrificial scent. But how, I pray,
Are odors made, if not by gradual change
Of sense or substance? Is your Beautiful
A seedless, rootless flower, or has it grown
With human growth, which means the rising sum
Of human struggle, order, knowledge?—sense
Trained to a fuller record, more exact—
To truer guidance of each passionate force?
Get me your roseate flesh without the blood;
Get fine aromas without structure wrought
From simpler being into manifold:
Then and then only flaunt your Beautiful
As what can live apart from thought, creeds, states,
Which mean life's structure. Osric, I beseech—
The infallible should be more catholic—
Join in a war-dance with the cannibals,
Hear Chinese music, love a face tattooed,
Give adoration to a pointed skull,
And think the Hindu Siva looks divine:
'Tis Art, 'tis Poesy. Say, you object:
How came you by that lofty dissidence,
If not through changes in the social man
Widening his consciousness from Here and Now
To larger wholes beyond the reach of sense;
Controlling to a fuller harmony
The thrill of passion and the rule of fact;
And paling false ideals in the light
Of full-rayed sensibilities which blend
Truth and desire? Taste, beauty, what are they
But the soul's choice towards perfect bias wrought
By finer balance of a fuller growth—
Sense brought to subtlest metamorphosis
Through love, thought, joy—the general human store
Which grows from all life's functions? As the plant

Holds its corolla, purple, delicate,
Solely as outflush of that energy
Which moves transformingly in root and branch."

Guildenstern paused, and Hamlet, quivering
Since Osric spoke, in transit imminent
From catholic striving into laxity,
Ventured his word. "Seems to me, Guildenstern,
Your argument, though shattering Osric's point
That sensibilities can move apart
From social order, yet has not annulled
His thesis that the life of Poesy
(Admitting it must grow from out the whole)
Has separate functions, a transfigured realm
Freed from the rigors of the practical,
Where what is hidden from the grosser world—
Stormed down by roar of engines and the shouts
Of eager concourse—rises beauteous
As voice of water-drops in sapphire caves;
A realm where finest spirits have free sway
In exquisite selection, uncontrolled
By hard material necessity
Of cause and consequence. For you will grant
The Ideal has discoveries which ask
No test, no faith, save that we joy in them:
A new-found continent, with spreading lands
Where pleasure charters all, where virtue, rank,
Use, right, and truth have but one name, Delight.
Thus Art's creations, when etherealized
To least admixture of the grosser fact
Delight may stamp as highest."

"Possible?"

Said Guildenstern, with touch of weariness,
"But then we might dispute of what is gross;
What high, what low."

"Nay," said Laertes, "ask
The mightiest makers who have reigned, still reign
Within the ideal realm. See if their thought
Be drained of practice and the thick warm blood
Of hearts that beat in action various
Through the wide drama of the struggling world.
Good-bye, Horatio."

Each now said "Good-bye."

Such breakfast, such beginning of the day
Is more than half the whole. The sun was hot
On southward branches of the meadow elms,
The shadows slowly farther crept and veered
Like changing memories, and Hamlet strolled
Alone and dubious on the impurpled path
Between the waving grasses of new June
Close by the stream where well-compacted boats
Were moored or moving with a lazy creak
To the soft dip of oars. All sounds were light
As tiny silver bells upon the robes
Of hovering silence. Birds made twitterings
That seemed but Silence self o'erfull of love.
'Twas invitation all to sweet repose;

And Hamlet, drowsy with the mingled draughts
Of cider and conflicting sentiments,
Chose a green couch and watched with half-closed eyes
The meadow-road, the stream and dreamy lights,
Until they merged themselves in sequence strange
With undulating ether, time, the soul,
The will supreme, the individual claim,
The social Ought, the lyrist's liberty,
Democritus, Pythagoras, in talk
With Anselm, Darwin, Comte, and Schopenhauer,
The poets rising slow from out their tombs
Summoned as arbiters—that border-world
Of dozing, ere the sense is fully locked.

And then he dreamed a dream so luminous
He woke (he says) convinced; but what it taught
Withholds as yet. Perhaps those graver shades
Admonished him that visions told in haste
Part with their virtues to the squandering lips
And leave the soul in wider emptiness.

April, 1874.

TWO LOVERS.

Two lovers by a moss-grown spring:
They leaned soft cheeks together there,
Mingled the dark and sunny hair,
And heard the wooing thrushes sing.
O budding time!
O love's blest prime!

Two wedded from the portal step:
The bells made happy carollings,
The air was soft as fanning wings,
White petals on the pathway slept.
O pure-eyed bride!
O tender pride!

Two faces o'er a cradle bent:
Two hands above the head were locked;
These pressed each other while they rocked,
Those watched a life that love had sent.
O solemn hour!
O hidden power!

Two parents by the evening fire:
The red light fell about their knees
On heads that rose by slow degrees
Like buds upon the lily spire.
O patient life!
O tender strife!

The two still sat together there,
The red light shone about their knees;
But all the heads by slow degrees
Had gone and left that lonely pair.
O voyage fast!
O vanished past!

The red light shone upon the floor
And made the space between them wide;
They drew their chairs up side by side,
Their pale cheeks joined, and said, "Once more!"
O memories!
O past that is!

SELF AND LIFE,

SELF.

CHANGEFUL comrade, Life of mine,
Before we two must part,
I will tell thee, thou shalt say,
What thou hast been and art.
Ere I lose my hold of thee
Justify thyself to me.

LIFE.

I was thy warmth upon thy mother's knee
When light and love within her eyes were one:
We laughed together by the laurel-tree,
Culling warm daisies 'neath the sloping sun:
We heard the chickens' lazy croon,
Where the trellised woodbines grew,
And all the summer afternoon
Mystic gladness o'er thee threw.
Was it person? Was it thing?
Was it touch or whispering?
It was bliss and it was I:
Bliss was what thou knew'st me by.

SELF.

Soon I knew thee more by Fear
And sense of what was not,
Haunting all I held most dear;
I had a double lot:
Ardor, cheated with alloy,
Wept the more for dreams of joy.

LIFE.

Remember how thy ardor's magic sense
Made poor things rich to thee and small things great
How hearth and garden, field and bushy fence,
Were thy own eager love incorporate;
And how the solemn, splendid Past
O'er thy early widened earth
Made grandeur, as on sunset cast
Dark elms near take mighty girth.
Hands and feet were tiny still
When we knew the historic thrill,
Breathed deep breath in heroes dead,
Tasted the immortals' bread.

SELF.

Seeing what I might have been
 Reproved the thing I was,
 Smoke on heaven's clearest sheen,
 The speck within the rose.
 By revered ones' frailties stung
 Reverence was with anguish wrung.

LIFE.

But all thy anguish and thy discontent
 Was growth of mine, the elemental strife
 Towards feeling manifold with vision blent
 To wider thought: I was no vulgar life
 That, like the water-mirrored ape,
 Not discerns the thing it sees,
 Nor knows its own in others' shape,
 Railing, scorning, at its ease.
 Half man's truth must hidden lie
 If unlit by Sorrow's eye.
 I by Sorrow wrought in thee
 Willing pain of ministry.

SELF.

Slowly was the lesson taught
 Through passion, error, care;
 Insight was with loathing fraught
 And effort with despair.
 Written on the wall I saw
 "Bow!" I knew, not loved, the law.

LIFE.

But then I brought a love that wrote within
 The law of gratitude, and made thy heart
 Beat to the heavenly tune of seraphin
 Whose only joy in having is, to impart:
 Till thou, poor Self—despite thy ire,
 Wrestling 'gainst my mingled share,
 Thy faults, hard falls, and vain desire
 Still to be what others were
 Filled, o'erflowed with tenderness
 Seeming more as thou wert less,
 Knew me through that anguish past
 As a fellowship more vast.

SELF.

Yea, I embrace thee, changeful Life!
 Far-sent, unchosen mate!
 Self and thou, no more at strife,
 Shall wed in hallowed state.
 Willing spousals now shall prove
 Life is justified by love.

THE DEATH OF MOSES.

MOSES, who spake with God as with his friend,
And ruled his people with the twofold power
Of wisdom that can dare and still be meek,
Was writing his last word, the sacred name
Unutterable of that Eternal Will
Which was and is and evermore shall be.
Yet was his task not finished, for the flock
Needed its shepherd, and the life-taught sage
Leaves no successor; but to chosen men,
The rescuers and guides of Israel,
A death was given called the Death of Grace,
Which freed them from the burden of the flesh
But left them rulers of the multitude
And loved companions of the lonely. This
Was God's last gift to Moses, this the hour
When soul must part from self and be but soul.

God spake to Gabriel, the messenger
Or mildest death that draws the parting life
Gently, as when a little rosy child
Lifts up its lips from off the bowl of milk
And so draws forth a curl that dipped its gold
In the soft white—thus Gabriel draws the soul.
“Go, bring the soul of Moses unto me!”
And the awe-stricken angel answered, “Lord,
How shall I dare to take his life who lives
Sole of his kind, not to be likened once
In all the generations of the earth?”

Then God called Michaël, him of pensive brow
Snow-vest and flaming sword, who knows and acts:
“Go, bring the spirit of Moses unto me!”
But Michaël with such grief as angels feel,
Loving the mortals whom they succor, pled:
“Almighty, spare me; it was I who taught
Thy servant Moses; he is part of me
As I of thy deep secrets, knowing them.”

Then God called Zamaël, the terrible,
The angel of fierce death, of agony
That comes in battle and in pestilence
Remorseless, sudden or with lingering throes.
And Zamaël, his raiment and broad wings
Blood-tinctured, the dark lustre of his eyes
Shrouding the red, fell like the gathering night
Before the prophet. But that radiance

Won from the heavenly Presence in the mount
 Gleamed on the prophet's brow and dazzling pierced
 Its conscious opposite: the angel turned
 His murky gaze aloof and inly said:
 "An angel this, deathless to angel's stroke."

But Moses felt the subtly nearing dark:—
 "Who art thou? and what wilt thou?" Zamaël then:
 "I am God's reaper; through the fields of life
 I gather ripened and unripened souls
 Both willing and unwilling. And I come
 Now to reap thee." But Moses cried,
 Firm as a seer who waits the trusted sign:
 "Reap thou the fruitless plant and common herb—
 Not him who from the womb was sanctified
 To teach the law of purity and love."
 And Zamaël baffled from his errand fled.

But Moses, pausing, in the air serene
 Heard now that mystic whisper, far yet near,
 The all-penetrating Voice, that said to him,
 "Moses, the hour is come and thou must die."
 "Lord, I obey; but thou rememberest
 How thou, Ineffable, didst take me once
 Within thy orb of light untouched by death."
 Then the Voice answered, "Be no more afraid:
 With me shall be thy death and burial."
 So Moses waited, ready now to die.

And the Lord came, invisible as a thought,
 Three angels gleaming on his secret track,
 Prince Michaël, Zamaël, Gabriel, charged to guard
 The soul-forsaken body as it fell
 And bear it to the hidden sepulchre
 Denied forever to the search of man.
 And the Voice said to Moses: "Close thine eyes."
 He closed them. "Lay thine hand upon thine heart.
 And draw thy feet together." He obeyed.
 And the Lord said, "O spirit, child of mine!
 A hundred years and twenty thou hast dwelt
 Within this tabernacle wrought of clay.
 This is the end: come forth and flee to heaven."

But the grieved soul with plaintive pleading cried,
 "I love this body with a clinging love:
 The courage fails me, Lord, to part from it."

"O child, come forth! for thou shalt dwell with me
 About the immortal throne where seraphs joy
 In growing vision and in growing love."

Yet hesitating, fluttering, like the bird
 With young wing weak and dubious, the soul
 Stayed. But behold! upon the death-dewed lips
 A kiss descended, pure, unspeakable—
 The bodiless Love without embracing Love
 That lingered in the body, drew it forth
 With heavenly strength and carried it to heaven.

But now beneath the sky the watchers all,
 Angels that keep the homes of Israel
 Or on high purpose wander o'er the world
 Leading the Gentiles, felt a dark eclipse:
 The greatest ruler among men was gone.
 And from the westward sea was heard a wail,
 A dirge as from the isles of Javanim,
 Crying, "Who now is left upon the earth
 Like him to teach the right and smite the wrong?"
 And from the East, far o'er the Syrian waste,
 Came slower, sadder, the answering dirge:
 "No prophet like him lives or shall arise
 In Israel or the world for evermore."

But Israel waited, looking toward the mount,
 Till with the deepening eve the elders came
 Saying, "His burial is hid with God.
 We stood far off and saw the angels lift
 His corpse aloft until they seemed a star
 That burnt itself away within the sky."

The people answered with mute orphaned gaze
 Looking for what had vanished evermore.
 Then through the gloom without them and within
 The spirit's shaping light, mysterious speech,
 Invisible Will wrought clear in sculptured sound,
 The thought-begotten daughter of the voice,
 Thrilled on their listening sense: "He has no tomb.
 He dwells not with you dead, but lives as Law."

"SWEET EVENINGS COME AND GO, LOVE."

"La noche buena se viene,
 La noche buena se va,
 Y nosotros nos iremos
 Y no volveremos mas."—Old Villancico.

SWEET evenings come and go, love,
 They came and went of yore:
 This evening of our life, love,
 Shall go and come no more.

When we have passed away, love,
 All things will keep their name;
 But yet no life on earth, love,
 With ours will be the same.

The daisies will be there, love,
 The stars in heaven will shine:
 I shall not feel thy wish, love,
 Nor thou my hand in thine.

A better time will come, love,
 And better souls be born:
 I would not be the best, love,
 To leave thee now forlorn.

ARION.

(HEROD. I. 24.)

ARION, whose melodic soul
Taught the dithyramb to roll
Like forest fires, and sing
Olympian suffering,

Had carried his diviner lore
From Corinth to the sister shore
Where Greece could largelier be,
Branching o'er Italy.

Then weighted with his glorious name
And bags of gold, aboard he came
'Mid harsh seafaring men
To Corinth bound again.

The sailors eyed the bags and thought:
"The gold is good, the man is nought—
And who shall track the wave
That opens for his grave?"

With brawny arms and cruel eyes
They press around him where he lies
In sleep beside his lyre,
Hearing the Muses quire.

He waked and saw this wolf-faced Death
Breaking the dream that filled his breath
With inspiration strong
Of yet unchanted song.

"Take, take my gold and let me live!"
He prayed, as kings do when they give
Their all with royal will,
Holding born kingship still.

To rob the living they refuse,
One death or other he must choose,
Either the watery pall
Or wounds and burial.

"My solemn robe then let me don,
Give me high space to stand upon,
That dying I may pour
A song unsung before."

It pleased them well to grant this prayer,
To hear for nought how it might fare
With men who paid their gold
For what a poet sold.

In flowing stole, his eyes aglow
With inward fire, he neared the prow
And took his god-like stand,
The cithara in hand.

The wolfish men all shrank aloof,
And feared this singer might be proof
Against their murderous power,
After his lyric hour.

But he, in liberty of song,
Fearless of death or other wrong,
With full spondaic toll
Poured forth his mighty soul:

Poured forth the strain his dream had taught,
A nome with lofty passion fraught
Such as makes battles won
On fields of Marathon.

The last long vowels trembled then
As awe within those wolfish men:
They said, with mutual stare,
Some god was present there.

But lo! Arion leaped on high
Ready, his descant done, to die;
Not asking, "Is it well?"
Like a pierced eagle fell.

"O MAY I JOIN THE CHOIR INVISIBLE."

Longum illud tempus, quum non ero, magis me movet, quam hoc exiguum.—CICERO, ad Att. xii. 18.

O MAY I join the choir invisible
Of those immortal dead who live again
In minds made better by their presence: live
In pulses stirred to generosity,
In deeds of daring rectitude, in scorn
For miserable aims that end with self,
In thoughts sublime that pierce the night like stars,
And with their mild persistence urge man's search
To vaster issues.

So to live is heaven:
To make undying music in the world,
Breathing as beauteous order that controls
With growing sway the growing life of man.
So we inherit that sweet purity
For which we struggled, failed, and agonized
With widening retrospect that bred despair.
Rebellious flesh that would not be subdued,
A vicious parent shaming still its child
Poor anxious penitence, is quick dissolved;
Its discords, quenched by meeting harmonies,
Die in the large and charitable air.
And all our rarer, better, truer self,
That sobbed religiously in yearning song,
That watched to ease the burden of the world,
Laboriously tracing what must be,
And what may yet be better—saw within
A worthier image for the sanctuary,
And shaped it forth before the multitude
Divinely human, raising worship so
To higher reverence more mixed with love—
That better self shall live till human Time
Shall fold its eyelids, and the human sky
Be gathered like a scroll within the tomb
Unread forever.

This is life to come,
Which martyred men have made more glorious
For us who strive to follow. May I reach
That purest heaven, be to other souls
The cup of strength in some great agony.
Enkindle generous ardor, feed pure love,
Beget the smiles that have no cruelty—
Be the sweet presence of a good diffused,
And in diffusion ever more intense.
So shall I join the choir invisible
Whose music is the gladness of the world.

THE SPANISH GYPSY.

[This work was originally written in the winter of 1864-65; after a visit to Spain in 1867 it was rewritten and amplified. The reader conversant with Spanish poetry will see that in two of the lyrics an attempt has been made to imitate the trochaic measure and assonance of the Spanish ballad.—May, 1868.]

BOOK I.

'Tis the warm South, where Europe spreads her lands
Like fretted leaflets, breathing on the deep:
Broad-breasted Spain, leaning with equal love
On the Mid Sea that moans with memories,
And on the untravelled Ocean's restless tides.
This river, shadowed by the battlements
And gleaming silvery towards the northern sky,
Feeds the famed stream that waters Andalus
And loiters, amorous of the fragrant air,
By Córdoba and Seville to the bay
Fronting Algarva and the wandering flood
Of Guadiana, This deep mountain gorge
Slopes widening on the olive-plumèd plains
Of fair Granáda: one far-stretching arm
Points to Elvira, one to eastward heights
Of Alpujarras where the new-bathed Day
With oriflamme uplifted o'er the peaks
Saddens the breasts of northward-looking snows
That loved the night, and soared with soaring stars;
Flashing the signals of his nearing swiftness
From Almeria's purple-shadowed bay
On to the far-off rocks that gaze and glow—
On to Alhambra, strong and ruddy heart
Of glorious Morisma, gasping now,
A maimèd giant in his agony.
This town that dips its feet within the stream,
And seems to sit a tower-crowned Cybele,
Spreading her ample robe adown the rocks,
Is rich Bedmár: 'twas Moorish long ago,
But now the Cross is sparkling on the Mosque,
And bells make Catholic the trembling air.
The fortress gleams in Spanish sunshine now
('Tis south a mile before the rays are Moorish)—
Hereditary jewel, agraffe bright
On all the many-titled privilege
Of young Duke Silva. No Castilian knight
That serves Queen Isabel has higher charge;
For near this frontier sits the Moorish king,
Not Boabdil the waverer, who usurps

A throne he trembles in, and fawning licks
 The feet of conquerors, but that fierce lion
 Grisly El Zagal, who has made his lair
 In Guadix' fort, and rushing thence with strength,
 Half his own fierceness, half the untainted heart
 Of mountain bands that fight for holiday,
 Wastes the fair lands that lie by Alcalá,
 Wreathing his horse's neck with Christian heads.

To keep the Christian frontier—such high trust
 Is young Duke Silva's; and the time is great.
 (What times are little? To the sentinel
 That hour is regal when he mounts on guard.)
 The fifteenth century since the Man Divine
 Taught and was hated in Capernaum
 Is near its end—is falling as a husk
 Away from all the fruit its years have riped.
 The Moslem faith, now flickering like a torch
 In a night struggle on this shore of Spain,
 Glares, a broad column of advancing flame,
 Along the Danube and the Illyrian shore
 Far into Italy, where eager monks,
 Who watch in dreams and dream the while they watch,
 See Christ grow paler in the baleful light,
 Crying again the cry of the forsaken.
 But faith, the stronger for extremity,
 Becomes prophetic, hears the far-off tread
 Of western chivalry, sees downward sweep
 The archangel Michael with the gleaming sword,
 And listens for the shriek of hurrying fiends
 Chased from their revels in God's sanctuary.
 So trusts the monk, and lifts appealing eyes
 To the high dome, the Church's firmament,
 Where the blue light-pierced curtain, rolled away,
 Reveals the throne and Him who sits thereon.
 So trust the men whose best hope for the world
 Is ever that the world is near its end:
 Impatient of the stars that keep their course
 And make no pathway for the coming Judge.

But other futures stir the world's great heart.
 The West now enters on the heritage
 Won from the tombs of mighty ancestors,
 The seeds, the gold, the gems, the silent harps
 That lay deep buried with the memories
 Of old renown.

No more, as once in sunny Avignon,
 The poet-scholar spreads the Homeric page,
 And gazes sadly, like the deaf at song;
 For now the old epic voices ring again
 And vibrate with the beat and melody
 Stirred by the warmth of old Ionian days.
 The martyred sage, the Attic orator,
 Immortally incarnate, like the gods,
 In spiritual bodies, winged words
 Holding a universe impalpable,
 Find a new audience. For evermore,

With grander resurrection than was feigned
 Of Attila's fierce Huns, the soul of Greece
 Conquers the bulk of Persia. The maimed form
 Of calmly-joyous beauty, marble-limbed,
 Yet breathing with the thought that shaped its lips,
 Looks mild reproach from out its opened grave
 At creeds of terror; and the vine-wreathed god
 Fronts the pierced Image with the crown of thorns.
 The soul of man is widening towards the past:
 No longer hanging at the breast of life
 Feeding in blindness to his parentage—
 Quenching all wonder with Omnipotence,
 Praising a name with indolent piety—
 He spells the record of his long descent,
 More largely conscious of the life that was.
 And from the height that shows where morning shone
 On far-off summits pale and gloomy now,
 The horizon widens round him, and the west
 Looks vast with untracked waves whereon his gaze
 Follows the flight of the swift-vanished bird
 That like the sunken sun is mirrored still
 Upon the yearning soul within the eye.
 And so in Córdoba through patient nights
 Columbus watches, or he sails in dreams
 Between the setting stars and finds new day;
 Then wakes again to the old weary days,
 Girds on the cord and frock of pale Saint Francis,
 And like him zealous pleads with foolish men.
 "I ask but for a million maravedis:
 Give me three caravels to find a world,
 New shores, new realms, new soldiers for the Cross.
Son cosas grandes!" Thus he pleads in vain;
 Yet faints not utterly, but pleads anew,
 Thinking, "God means it, and has chosen me."
 For this man is the pulse of all mankind
 Feeding an embryo future, offspring strange
 Of the fond Present, that with mother-prayers
 And mother-fancies looks for championship
 Of all her loved beliefs and old-world ways
 From that young Time she bears within her womb.
 The sacred places shall be purged again,
 The Turk converted, and the Holy Church,
 Like the mild Virgin with the outspread robe,
 Shall fold all tongues and nations lovingly.

But since God works by armies, who shall be
 The modern Cyrus? Is it France most Christian,
 Who with his lilies and brocaded knights,
 French oaths, French vices, and the newest style
 Of out-puffed sleeve, shall pass from west to east,
 A winnowing fan to purify the seed
 For fair millennial harvests soon to come?
 Or is not Spain the land of chosen warriors?—
 Crusaders consecrated from the womb,
 Carrying the sword-cross stamped upon their souls
 By the long yearnings of a nation's life,
 Through all the seven patient centuries

Since first Pelayo and his resolute band
 Trusted the God within their Gothic hearts
 At Covadunga, and defied Mahound;
 Beginning so the Holy War of Spain
 That now is panting with the eagerness
 Of labor near its end. The silver cross
 Glitters o'er Malaga and streams dread light
 On Moslem galleys, turning all their stores
 From threats to gifts. What Spanish knight is he
 Who, living now, holds it not shame to live
 Apart from that hereditary battle
 Which needs his sword? Castilian gentlemen
 Choose not their task—they choose to do it well.

The time is great, and greater no man's trust
 Than his who keeps the fortress for his king,
 Wearing great honors as some delicate robe
 Brocaded o'er with names 'twere sin to tarnish.
 Born de la Cerda, Calatravan knight,
 Count of Segura, fourth Duke of Bedmár,
 Offshoot from that high stock of old Castile
 Whose topmost branch is proud Medina Celi—
 Such titles with their blazonry are his
 Who keeps this fortress, its sworn governor,
 Lord of the valley, master of the town,
 Commanding whom he will, himself commanded
 By Christ his Lord who sees him from the Cross
 And from bright heaven where the Mother pleads;—
 By good Saint James upon the milk-white steed,
 Who leaves his bliss to fight for chosen Spain;—
 By the dead gaze of all his ancestors;—
 And by the mystery of his Spanish blood
 Charged with the awe and glories of the past.

See now with soldiers in his front and rear
 He winds at evening through the narrow streets
 That toward the Castle gate climb devious:
 His charger, of fine Andalusian stock,
 An Indian beauty, black but delicate,
 Is conscious of the herald trumpet note,
 The gathering glances, and familiar ways
 That lead fast homeward: she forgets fatigue,
 And at the light touch of the master's spur
 Thrills with the zeal to bear him royally,
 Arches her neck and clambers up the stones
 As if disdainful of the difficult steep.
 Night-black the charger, black the rider's plume,
 But all between is bright with morning hues—
 Seems ivory and gold and deep blue gems,
 And starry flashing steel and pale vermillion,
 All set in jasper: on his surcoat white
 Glitter the sword-belt and the jewelled hilt,
 Red on the back and breast the holy cross,
 And 'twixt the helmet and the soft-spun white
 Thick tawny wavelets like the lion's mane
 Turn backward from his brow, pale, wide, erect,
 Shadowing blue eyes—blue as the rain-washed sky

That braced the early stem of Gothic kings
 He claims for ancestry. A goodly knight,
 A noble caballero, broad of chest
 And long of limb. So much the August sun,
 Now in the west but shooting half its beams
 Past a dark rocky profile toward the plain,
 At windings of the path across the slope
 Makes suddenly luminous for all who see:
 For women smiling from the terraced roofs;
 For boys that prone on trucks with head up-propped
 Lazy and curious, stare irreverent;
 For men who make obeisance with degrees
 Of good-will shading towards servility,
 Where good-will ends and secret fear begins
 And curses, too, low-muttered through the teeth,
 Explanatory to the God of Shem.

Five, grouped within a whitened tavern court
 Of Moorish fashion, where the trellised vines
 Purpling above their heads make odorous shade,
 Note through the open door the passers-by,
 Getting some rills of novelty to speed
 The lagging stream of talk and help the wine.
 'Tis Christian to drink wine: whoso denies
 His flesh at bidding save of Holy Church,
 Let him beware and take to Christian sins
 Lest he be taxed with Moslem sanctity.

The souls are five, the talkers only three.
 (No time, most tainted by wrong faith and rule,
 But holds some listeners and dumb animals.)
 MINE HOST is one: he with the well-arched nose,
 Soft-eyed, fat-handed, loving men for nought
 But his own humor, patting old and young
 Upon the back, and mentioning the cost
 With confidential blandness, as a tax
 That he collected much against his will
 From Spaniards who were all his bosom friends:
 Warranted Christian—else how keep an inn,
 Which calling asks true faith? though like his wine
 Of cheaper sort, a trifle over-new.
 His father was a convert, chose the chrism
 As men choose physic, kept his chimney warm
 With smokiest wood upon a Saturday,
 Counted his gains and grudges on a chaplet,
 And crossed himself asleep for fear of spies;
 Trusting the God of Israel would see
 'Twas Christian tyranny that made him base.
 Our host his son was born ten years too soon,
 Had heard his mother call him Ephraim,
 Knew holy things from common, thought it sin
 To feast on days when Israel's children mourned,
 So had to be converted with his sire,
 To doff the awe he learned as Ephraim,
 And suit his manners to a Christian name.
 But infant awe, that unborn moving thing,
 Dies with what nourished it, can never rise
 From the dead womb and walk and seek new pasture.

Thus baptism seemed to him a merry game
 Not tried before, all sacraments a mode
 Of doing homage for one's property,
 And all religions a queer human whim
 Or else a vice, according to degrees:
 As, 'tis a whim to like your chestnuts hot,
 Burn your own mouth and draw your face awry,
 A vice to pelt frogs with them—animals
 Content to take life coolly. And Lorenzo
 Would have all lives made easy, even lives
 Of spiders and inquisitors, yet still
 Wishing so well to flies and Moors and Jews
 He rather wished the others easy death;
 For loving all men clearly was deferred
 Till all men loved each other. Such mine Host,
 With chiselled smile caressing Seneca,
 The solemn mastiff leaning on his knee.

His right-hand guest is solemn as the dog,
 Square-faced and massive: BLASCO is his name,
 A prosperous silversmith from Aragon;
 In speech not silvery, rather tuned as notes
 From a deep vessel made of plenteous iron,
 Or some great bell of slow but certain swing
 That, if you only wait, will tell the hour
 As well as flippant clocks that strike in haste
 And set off chiming a superfluous tune—
 Like JUAN there, the spare man with the lute,
 Who makes you dizzy with his rapid tongue,
 Whirring athwart your mind with comment swift
 On speech you would have finished by and by,
 Shooting your bird for you while you are loading,
 Cheapening your wisdom as a pattern known,
 Woven by any shuttle on demand.
 Can never sit quite still, too: sees a wasp
 And kills it with a movement like a flash;
 Whistles low notes or seems to thrum his lute
 As a mere hyphen 'twixt two syllables
 Of any steadier man; walks up and down
 And snuffs the orange flowers and shoots a pea
 To hit a streak of light let through the awning.
 Has a queer face: eyes large as plums, a nose
 Small, round, uneven, like a bit of wax
 Melted and cooled by chance. Thin-fingered, lithe,
 And as a squirrel noiseless, startling men
 Only by quickness. In his speech and look
 A touch of graceful wildness, as of things
 Not trained or tamed for uses of the world;
 More like the Fauns that roamed in days of old
 About the listening whispering woods, and shared
 The subtler sense of sylvan ears and eyes
 Undulled by scheming thought, yet joined the rout
 Of men and women on the festal days,
 And played the syrinx too, and knew love's pains,
 Turning their anguish into melody.
 For Juan was a minstrel still, in times
 When minstrelsy was held a thing outworn.

Spirits seem buried and their epitaph
 Is writ in Latin by severest pens,
 Yet still they flit above the trodden grave
 And find new bodies, animating them
 In quaint and ghostly way with antique souls.
 So Juan was a troubadour revived,
 Freshening life's dusty road with babbling rills
 Of wit and song, living 'mid harnessed men
 With limbs ungalled by armor, ready so
 To soothe them weary, and to cheer them sad.
 Guest at the board, companion in the camp,
 A crystal mirror to the life around,
 Flashing the comment keen of simple fact
 Defined in words; lending brief lyric voice
 To grief and sadness; hardly taking note
 Of difference betwixt his own and others';
 But rather singing as a listener
 To the deep moans, the cries, the wild strong joys
 Of universal Nature, old yet young.
 Such Juan, the third talker, shimmering bright
 As butterfly or bird with quickest life.

The silent ROLDAN has his brightness too,
 But only in his spangles and rosettes.
 His parti-colored vest and crimson hose
 Are dulled with old Valencian dust, his eyes
 With straining fifty years at gilded balls
 To catch them dancing, or with brazen looks
 At men and women as he made his jests
 Some thousand times and watched to count the pence
 His wife was gathering. His olive face
 Has an old writing in it, characters
 Stamped deep by grins that had no merriment,
 The soul's rude mark proclaiming all its blank;
 As on some faces that have long grown old
 In lifting tapers up to forms obscene
 On ancient walls and chuckling with false zest
 To please my lord, who gives the larger fee
 For that hard industry in apishness.
 Roldan would gladly never laugh again;
 Pensioned, he would be grave as any ox,
 And having beans and crumbs and oil secured
 Would borrow no man's jokes for evermore.
 'Tis harder now because his wife is gone,
 Who had quick feet, and danced to ravishment
 Of every ring jewelled with Spanish eyes,
 But died and left this boy, lame from his birth,
 And sad and obstinate, though when he will
 He sings God-taught such marrow-thrilling strains
 As seem the very voice of dying Spring,
 A flute-like wail that mourns the blossoms gone,
 And sinks, and is not, like their fragrant breath,
 With fine transition on the trembling air.
 He sits as if imprisoned by some fear,
 Motionless, with wide eyes that seem not made
 For hungry glancing of a twelve-year'd boy
 To mark the living thing that he could tease,

But for the gaze of some primeval sadness
 Dark twin with light in the creative ray.
 This little PABLO has his spangles too,
 And large rosettes to hide his poor left foot
 Rounded like any hoof (his mother thought
 God willed it so to punish all her sins).

I said the souls were five—besides the dog.
 But there was still a sixth, with wrinkled face,
 Grave and disgusted with all merriment
 Not less than Roldan. It is ANNIBAL,
 The experienced monkey who performs the tricks,
 Jumps through the hoops, and carries round the hat.
 Once full of sallies and impromptu feats,
 Now cautious not to light on aught that's new,
 Lest he be whipped to do it o'er again
 From A to Z, and make the gentry laugh:
 A misanthropic monkey, gray and grim,
 Bearing a lot that has no remedy
 For want of concert in the monkey tribe.

We see the company, above their heads
 The braided matting, golden as ripe corn,
 Stretched in a curving strip close by the grapes,
 Elsewhere rolled back to greet the cooler sky;
 A fountain near, vase-shapen and broad-lipped,
 Where timorous birds alight with tiny feet,
 And hesitate and bend wise listening ears,
 And fly away again with undipped beak.
 On the stone floor the juggler's heaped-up goods,
 Carpet and hoops, viol and tambourine,
 Where Annibal sits perched with brows severe,
 A serious ape whom none take seriously,
 Obliged in this fool's world to earn his nuts
 By hard buffoonery. We see them all,
 And hear their talk—the talk of Spanish men,
 With Southern intonation, vowels turned
 Caressingly between the consonants,
 Persuasive, willing, with such intervals
 As music borrows from the wooing birds,
 That plead with subtly curving, sweet descent—
 And yet can quarrel, as these Spaniards can.

JUAN (near the doorway).

You hear the trumpet? There's old Ramon's blast.
 No bray but his can shake the air so well.
 He takes his trumpeting as solemnly
 As angel charged to wake the dead; thinks war
 Was made for trumpeters, and their great art
 Made solely for themselves who understand it.
 His features all have shaped themselves to blowing,
 And when his trumpet's bagged or left at home
 He seems a chattel in a broker's booth,
 A spoutless watering-can, a promise to pay
 No sum particular. O fine old Ramon!
 The blasts get louder and the clattering hoofs;
 They crack the ear as well as heaven's thunder
 For owls that listen blinking. There's the banner.

HOST (*joining him: the others follow to the door*).

The Duke has finished reconnoitring, then?
We shall hear news. They say he means a sally—
Would strike El Zagal's Moors as they push home
Like ants with booty heavier than themselves;
Then, joined by other nobles with their bands,
Lay siege to Guadix. Juan, you're a bird
That nest within the Castle. What say you?

JUAN.

Nought, I say nought. 'Tis but a toilsome game
To bet upon that feather Policy,
And guess where after twice a hundred puffs
'Twill catch another feather crossing it:
Guess how the Pope will blow and how the king;
What force my lady's fan has; how a cough
Seizing the Padre's throat may raise a gust,
And how the queen may sigh the feather down.
Such catching at imaginary threads,
Such spinning twisted air, is not for me.
If I should want a game, I'll rather bet
On racing snails, two large, slow, lingering snails—
No spurring, equal weights—a chance sublime,
Nothing to guess at, pure uncertainty.
Here comes the Duke. They give but feeble shouts.
And some look sour.

HOST.

That spoils a fair occasion.
Civility brings no conclusions with it,
And cheerful *Vivas* make the moments glide
Instead of grating like a rusty wheel.

JUAN.

O they are dullards, kick because they're stung,
And bruise a friend to show they hate a wasp.

HOST.

Best treat your wasp with delicate regard;
When the right moment comes say, "By your leave,"
Use your heel—so! and make an end of him.
That's if we talked of wasps; but our young Duke—
Spain holds not a more gallant gentleman.
Live, live, Duke Silva! 'Tis a rare smile he has,
But seldom seen.

JUAN.

A true hidalgo's smile,
That gives much favor, but beseeches none.
His smile is sweetened by his gravity:
It comes like dawn upon Sierra snows,
Seeming more generous for the coldness gone;
Breaks from the calm—a sudden opening flower
On dark deep waters: now a chalice shut,
A mystic shrine, the next a full-rayed star,
Thrilling, pulse-quickenning as a living word.
I'll make a song of that.

HOST.

Prithee, not now.
 You'll fall to staring like a wooden saint,
 And wag your head as it were set on wires.
 Here's fresh sherbét. Sit, be good company.
 (To BLASCO) You are a stranger, sir, and cannot know
 How our Duke's nature suits his princely frame.

BLASCO.

Nay, but I marked his spurs—chased cunningly!
 A duke should know good gold and silver plate;
 Then he will know the quality of mine.
 I've ware for tables and for altars too,
 Our Lady in all sizes, crosses, bells:
 He'll need such weapons full as much as swords
 If he would capture any Moorish town.
 For, let me tell you, when a mosque is cleansed . . .

JUAN.

The demons fly so thick from sound of bells
 And smell of incense, you may see the air
 Streaked with them as with smoke. Why, they are spirits:
 You may well think how crowded they must be
 To make a sort of haze.

BLASCO.

I knew not that.
 Still, they're of smoky nature, demons are;
 And since you say so—well, it proves the more
 The need of bells and censers. Ay, your Duke
 Sat well: a true hidalgo. I can judge—
 Of harness specially. I saw the camp,
 The royal camp at Velez Malaga.
 'Twas like the court of heaven—such liveries!
 And torches carried by the score at night
 Before the nobles. Sirs, I made a dish
 To set an emerald in would fit a crown,
 For Don Alonzo, lord of Aguilar.
 Your Duke's no whit behind him in his mien
 Or harness either. But you seem to say
 The people love him not.

HOST.

They've nought against him.
 But certain winds will make men's temper bad.
 When the Solano blows hot venom'd breath,
 It acts upon men's knives: steel takes to stabbing
 Which else, with cooler winds, were honest steel,
 Cutting but garlic. There's a wind just now
 Blows right from Seville—

BLASCO.

Ay, you mean the wind . . .
 Yes, yes, a wind that's rather hot . . .

HOST.

With fagots.

JUAN.

A wind that suits not with our townsmen's blood.
Abram, 'tis said, objected to be scorched,
And, as the learned Arabs vouch, he gave
The antipathy in full to Ishmaël.
'Tis true, these patriarchs had their oddities.

BLASCO.

Their oddities? I'm of their mind, I know.
Though, as to Abraham and Ishmaël,
I'm an old Christian, and owe nought to them
Or any Jew among them. But I know
We made a stir in Saragossa—we:
The men of Aragon ring hard—true metal.
Sirs, I'm no friend to heresy, but then
A Christian's money is not safe. As how?
A lapsing Jew or any heretic
May owe me twenty ounces: suddenly
He's prisoned, suffers penalties—'tis well:
If men will not believe, 'tis good to make them,
But let the penalties fall on them alone.
The Jew is stripped, his goods are confiscate;
Now, where, I pray you, go my twenty ounces?
God knows, and perhaps the King may, but not I.
And more, my son may lose his young wife's dower
Because 'twas promised since her father's soul
Fell to wrong thinking. How was I to know?
I could but use my sense and cross myself.
Christian is Christian—I give in—but still
Taxing is taxing, though you call it holy.
We Saragossans liked not this new tax
They call the—nonsense, I'm from Aragon!
I speak too bluntly. But, for Holy Church,
No man believes more.

HOST.

Nay, sir, never fear.
Good Master Roldan here is no delator.

ROLDAN (*starting from a reverie*).

You speak to me, sirs? I perform to-night—
The Plaça Santiago. Twenty tricks,
All different. I dance, too. And the boy
Sings like a bird. I crave your patronage.

BLASCO.

Faith, you shall have it, sir. In travelling
I take a little freedom, and am gay.
You marked not what I said just now?

ROLDAN.

I? no.

I pray your pardon. I've a twinging knee,
That makes it hard to listen. You were saying?

BLASCO.

Nay, it was nought. (*Aside to Host*) Is it his deepness?

HOST.

No.

He's deep in nothing but his poverty.

BLASCO.

But 'twas his poverty that made me think . . .

HOST.

His piety might wish to keep the feasts
As well as fasts. No fear ; he hears not.

BLASCO.

Good.

I speak my mind about the penalties,
But, look you, I'm against assassination.
You know my meaning—Master Arbués,
The Grand Inquisitor in Aragon.
I knew nought—paid no copper towards the dead.
But I was there, at prayers, within the church.
How could I help it? Why, the saints were there,
And looked straight on above the altars. I . . .

JUAN.

Looked carefully another way.

BLASCO.

Why, at my beads.

'Twas after midnight, and the canons all
Were chanting matins. I was not in church
To gape and stare. I saw the martyr kneel:
I never liked the look of him alive—
He was no martyr then. I thought he made
An ugly shadow as he crept athwart
The bands of light, then passed within the gloom
By the broad pillar. 'Twas in our great Seo,
At Saragossa. The pillars tower so large
You cross yourself to see them, lest white Death
Should hide behind their dark. And so it was.
I looked away again and told my beads
Unthinkingly ; but still a man has ears ;
And right across the chanting came a sound
As if a tree had crashed above the roar
Of some great torrent. So it seemed to me ;
For when you listen long and shut your eyes
Small sounds get thunderous. He had a shell
Like any lobster : a good iron suit
From top to toe beneath the innocent serge.
That made the tell-tale sound. But then came shrieks.
The chanting stopped and turned to rushing feet,
And in the midst lay Master Arbués,
Felled like an ox. 'Twas wicked butchery.
Some honest men had hoped it would have scared
The Inquisition out of Aragon.
'Twas money thrown away—I would say, crime—
Clean thrown away.

HOST.

That was a pity now.
Next to a missing thrust, what irks me most

Is a neat well-aimed stroke that kills your man,
 Yet ends in mischief—as in Aragon.
 It was a lesson to our people here.
 Else there's a monk within our city walls,
 A holy, high-born, stern Dominican,
 They might have made the great mistake to kill.

BLASCO.

What! is he? . . .

HOST.

Yes; a Master Arbués
 Of finer quality. The Prior here
 And uncle to our Duke.

BLASCO.

He will want plate:
 A holy pillar or a crucifix.
 But, did you say, he was like Arbués?

JUAN.

As a black eagle with gold beak and claws
 Is like a raven. Even in his cowl,
 Covered from head to foot, the Prior is known
 From all the black herd round. When he uncovers
 And stands white-frocked, with ivory face, his eyes
 Black-gleaming, black his coronal of hair
 Like shredded jasper, he seems less a man
 With struggling aims, than pure incarnate Will,
 Fit to subdue rebellious nations, nay,
 That human flesh he breathes in, charged with passion
 Which quivers in his nostril and his lip,
 But disciplined by long in-dwelling will
 To silent labor in the yoke of law.
 A truce to thy comparisons, Lorenzo!
 Thine is no subtle nose for difference;
 'Tis dulled by feigning and civility.

HOST.

Pooh, thou'rt a poet, crazed with finding words
 May stick to things and seem like qualities.
 No pebble is a pebble in thy hands:
 'Tis a moon out of work, a barren egg,
 Or twenty things that no man sees but thee.
 Our Father Isidor's—a living saint,
 And that is heresy, some townsmen think:
 Saints should be dead, according to the Church.
 My mind is this: the Father is so holy
 'Twere sin to wish his soul detained from bliss.
 Easy translation to the realms above,
 The shortest journey to the seventh heaven,
 Is what I'd never grudge him.

BLASCO.

Piously said.
 Look you, I'm dutiful, obey the Church
 When there's no help for it: I mean to say,
 When Pope and Bishop and all customers
 Order alike. But there be bishops now,

And were aforetime, who have held it wrong,
 This hurry to convert the Jews. As how?
 Your Jew pays tribute to the bishop, say.
 That's good, and must please God, to see the Church
 Maintained in ways that ease the Christian's purse.
 Convert the Jew, and where's the tribute, pray?
 He lapses, too: 'tis slippery work, conversion:
 And then the holy taxing carries off
 His money at one sweep. No tribute more!
 He's penitent or burnt, and there's an end.
 Now guess which pleases God . . .

JUAN.

Whether he likes

A well-burnt Jew or well-fed bishop best.

[While Juan put this problem theologic
 Entered, with resonant step, another guest—
 A soldier: all his keenness in his sword,
 His eloquence in scars upon his cheek,
 His virtue in much slaying of the Moor:
 With brow well-creased in horizontal folds
 To save the space, as having nought to do:
 Lips prone to whistle whisperingly—no tune,
 But trotting rhythm: meditative eyes,
 Most often fixed upon his legs and spurs:
 Styled Captain Lopez.]

LOPEZ.

At your service, sirs.

JUAN.

Ha, Lopez? Why, thou hast a face full-charged
 As any herald's. What news of the wars?

LOPEZ.

Such news as is most bitter on my tongue.

JUAN.

Then spit it forth.

HOST.

Sit, Captain: here's a cup,

Fresh-filled. What news?

LOPEZ.

'Tis bad. We make no sally:

We sit still here and wait whate'er the Moor
 Shall please to do.

HOST.

Some townsmen will be glad.

LOPEZ.

Glad, will they be? But I'm not glad, not I,
 Nor any Spanish soldier of clean blood.
 But the Duke's wisdom is to wait a siege
 Instead of laying one. Therefore—meantime—
 He will be married straightway.

HOST.

Ha, ha, ha!

Thy speech is like an hour-glass; turn it down

The other way, 'twill stand as well, and say
 The Duke will wed, therefore he waits a siege.
 But what say Don Diego and the Prior?
 The holy uncle and the fiery Don?

LOPEZ.

O there be sayings running all abroad
 As thick as nuts o'erturned. No man need lack.
 Some say, 'twas letters changed the Duke's intent:
 From Malaga, says Blas. From Rome, says Quintin.
 From spies at Guadix, says Sebastian.
 Some say, 'tis all a pretext—say, the Duke
 Is but a lapdog hanging on a skirt,
 Turning his eyeballs upward like a monk:
 'Twas Don Diego said that—so says Blas;
 Last week, he said . . .

JUAN.

O do without the "said!"
 Open thy mouth and pause in lieu of it.
 I had as lief be pelted with a pea
 Irregularly in the self-same spot
 As hear such iteration without rule,
 Such torture of uncertain certainty.

LOPEZ.

Santiago! Juan, thou art hard to please.
 I speak not for my own delighting, I.
 I can be silent, I.

BLASCO.

Nay, sir, speak on!
 I like your matter well. I deal in plate.
 This wedding touches me. Who is the bride?

LOPEZ.

One that some say the Duke does ill to wed.
 One that his mother reared—God rest her soul!—
 Duchess Diana—she who died last year.
 A bird picked up away from any nest.
 Her name—the Duchess gave it—is Fedalma.
 No harm in that. But the Duke stoops, they say,
 In wedding her. And that's the simple truth.

JUAN.

Thy simple truth is but a false opinion:
 The simple truth of asses who believe
 Their thistle is the very best of food.
 Fie, Lopez, thou a Spaniard with a sword
 Dreamest a Spanish noble ever stoops
 By doing honor to the maid he loves!
 He stoops alone when he dishonors her.

LOPEZ.

Nay, I said nought against her.

JUAN.

Better not.
 Else I would challenge thee to fight with wits,

And spear thee through and through ere thou couldst draw
 The bluntest word. Yes, yes, consult thy spurs :
 Spurs are a sign of knighthood, and should tell thee
 That knightly love is blent with reverence
 As heavenly air is blent with heavenly blue.
 Don Silva's heart beats to a loyal tune :
 He wills no highest-born Castilian dame,
 Betrothed to highest noble, should be held
 More sacred than Fedalma. He enshrines
 Her virgin image for the general awe
 And for his own—will guard her from the world,
 Nay, his profaner self, lest he should lose
 The place of his religion. He does well.
 Nought can come closer to the poet's strain.

HOST.

Or farther from his practice, Juan, eh ?
 If thou'rt a sample ?

JUAN.

Wrong there, my Lorenzo !
 Touching Fedalma the poor poet plays
 A finer part even than the noble Duke.

LOPEZ.

By making ditties, singing with round mouth
 Likest a crowing cock ? Thou meanest that ?

JUAN.

Lopez, take physic, thou art getting ill,
 Growing descriptive ; 'tis unnatural.
 I mean, Don Silva's love expects reward,
 Kneels with a heaven to come ; but the poor poet
 Worships without reward, nor hopes to find
 A heaven save in his worship. He adores
 The sweetest woman for her sweetness' sake,
 Joys in the love that was not born for him,
 Because 'tis lovingness, as beggars joy,
 Warming their naked limbs on wayside walls,
 To hear a tale of princes and their glory.
 There's a poor poet (poor, I mean, in coin)
 Worships Fedalma with so true a love
 That if her silken robe were changed for rags,
 And she were driven out to stony wilds
 Barefoot, a scornèd wanderer, he would kiss
 Her ragged garment's edge, and only ask
 For leave to be her slave. Digest that, friend,
 Or let it lie upon thee as a weight
 To check light thinking of Fedalma.

LOPEZ.

I ?

I think no harm of her ; I thank the saints
 I wear a sword and peddle not in thinking.
 'Tis Father Marcos says she'll not confess
 And loves not holy water ; says her blood
 Is infidel ; says the Duke's wedding her
 Is union of light with darkness.

JUAN.

Tush!

[Now Juan—who by snatches touched his lute
 With soft arpeggio, like a whispered dream
 Of sleeping music, while he spoke of love—
 In jesting anger at the soldier's talk
 Thrummed loud and fast, then faster and more loud,
 Till, as he answered "Tush!" he struck a chord
 Sudden as whip-crack close by Lopez' ear.
 Mine Host and Blasco smiled, the mastiff barked,
 Roldan looked up and Annibal looked down,
 Cautiously neutral in so new a case;
 The boy raised longing, listening eyes that seemed
 An exiled spirit's waiting in strained hope
 Of voices coming from the distant land.
 But Lopez bore the assault like any rock:
 That was not what he drew his sword at—he!
 He spoke with neck erect.]

LOPEZ.

If that's a hint
 The company should ask thee for a song,
 Sing, then!

HOST.

Ay, Juan, sing, and jar no more.
 Something brand new. Thou'rt won't to make my ear
 A test of novelties. Hast thou aught fresh?

JUAN.

As fresh as rain-drops. Here's a Cancion
 Springs like a tiny mushroom delicate
 Out of the priest's foul scandal of Fedalma.

[He preluded with querying intervals,
 Rising, then falling just a semitone,
 In minor cadence—sound with poised wing
 Hovering and quivering towards the needed fall.
 Then in a voice that shook the willing air
 With masculine vibration sang this song,

*Should I long that dark were fair?
 Say, O song!
 Lacks my love aught, that I should long?*

*Dark the night, with breath all flow'rs,
 And tender broken voice that fills
 With ravishment the listening hours:
 Whisperings, wooings,
 Liquid ripples and soft ring-dove cooings
 In low-toned rhythm that love's aching stills.
 Dark the night,
 Yet is she bright,
 For in her dark she brings the mystic star,
 Trembling yet strong, as is the voice of love,
 From some unknown afar.
 O radiant Dark! O darkly fostered ray!
 Thou hast a joy too deep for shallow Day.*

While Juan sang, all round the tavern court
 Gathered a constellation of black eyes.
 Fat Lola leaned upon the balcony
 With arms that might have pillowed Hercules
 (Who built, 'tis known, the mightiest Spanish towns);
 Thin Alda's face, sad as a wasted passion,
 Leaned o'er the nodding baby's; 'twixt the rails
 The little Pepe showed his two black beads,
 His flat-ringed hair and small Semitic nose,
 Complete and tiny as a new-born minnow;
 Patting his head and holding in her arms
 The baby senior, stood Lorenzo's wife
 All negligent, her kerchief discomposed
 By little clutches, woman's coquetry
 Quite turned to mother's cares and sweet content.
 These on the balcony, while at the door
 Gazed the lank boys and lazy-shouldered men.
 'Tis likely too the rats and insects peeped,
 Being southern Spanish ready for a lounge.
 The singer smiled, as doubtless Orpheus smiled,
 To see the animals both great and small,
 The mountainous elephant and scampering mouse,
 Held by the ears in decent audience;
 Then, when mine host desired the strain once more,
 He fell to preluding with rhythmic change
 Of notes recurrent, soft as pattering drops
 That fall from off the eaves in faëry dance
 When clouds are breaking; till at measured pause
 He struck with strength, in rare responsive chords.]

HOST.

Come, then, a gayer ballad, if thou wilt:
 I quarrel not with change. What say you, Captain?

LOPEZ.

All's one to me. I note no change of tune,
 Not I, save in the ring of horses' hoofs,
 Or in the drums and trumpets when they call
 To action or retreat. I ne'er could see
 The good of singing.

BLASCO.

Why, it passes time—
 Saves you from getting over-wise: that's good.
 For, look you, fools are merry here below,
 Yet they will go to heaven all the same,
 Having the sacraments; and, look you, heaven
 Is a long holiday, and solid men,
 Used to much business, might be ill at ease
 Not liking play. And so, in travelling,
 I shape myself betimes to idleness
 And take fools' pleasures . . .

HOST.

Hark, the song begins!

JUAN (*sings*).

*Maiden, crowned with glossy blackness,
Lithe as panther forest-roaming,
Long-armed naiad, when she dances,
On a stream of ether floating—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!*

*Form all curves like softness drifted,
Wave-kissed marble roundly dimpling,
Far-off music slowly winged,
Gently rising, gently sinking—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!*

*Pure as rain-tear on a rose-leaf,
Cloud high-born in noonday spotless,
Sudden perfect as the dew-bead,
Gem of earth and sky begotten—
Bright, O bright Fedalma!*

*Beauty has no mortal father,
Holy light her form engendered
Out of tremor, yearning, gladness,
Presage sweet and joy remembered—
Child of Light, Fedalma!*

BLASCO.

Faith, a good song, sung to a stirring tune.
I like the words returning in a round;
It gives a sort of sense. Another such!

ROLDAN (*rising*).

Sirs, you will hear my boy. 'Tis very hard
When gentles sing for nought to all the town.
How can a poor man live? And now 'tis time
I go to the Plaça—who will give me pence
When he can hear hidalgos and give nought?

JUAN.

True, friend. Be pacified. I'll sing no more.
Go thou, and we will follow. Never fear.
My voice is common as the ivy-leaves,
Plucked in all seasons—bears no price; thy boy's
Is like the almond blossoms. Ah, he's lame!

HOST.

Load him not heavily. Here, Pedro! help.
Go with them to the Plaça, take the hoops.
The sights will pay thee.

BLASCO.

I'll be there anon,
And set the fashion with a good white coin.
But let us see as well as hear.

HOST.

Ay, prithee.
Some tricks, a dance.

BLASCO.

Yes, 'tis more rational.

ROLDAN (*turning round with the bundle and monkey on his shoulders*).

You shall see all, sirs. There's no man in Spain
Knows his art better. I've a twinging knee
Oft hinders dancing, and the boy is lame.
But no man's monkey has more tricks than mine.

[At this high praise the gloomy Annibal,
Mournful professor of high drollery,
Seemed to look gloomier, and the little troop
Went slowly out, escorted from the door
By all the idlers. From the balcony
Slowly subsided the black radiance
Of agate eyes, and broke in chattering sounds,
Coaxings and trampings, and the small hoarse squeak
Of Pepe's reed. And our group talked again.]

HOST.

I'll get this juggler, if he quits him well,
An audience here as choice as can be lured.
For me, when a poor devil does his best,
'Tis my delight to soothe his soul with praise.
What though the best be bad? remains the good
Of throwing food to a lean hungry dog.
I'd give up the best jugglery in life
To see a miserable juggler pleased.
But that's my humor. Crowds are malcontent
As cruel as the Holy . . . Shall we go?
All of us now together?

LOPEZ.

Well, not I.

I may be there anon, but first I go
To the lower prison. There is strict command
That all our Gypsy prisoners shall to-night
Be lodged within the fort. They've forged enough
Of balls and bullets—used up all the metal.
At morn to-morrow they must carry stones
Up the south tower. 'Tis a fine stalwart band,
Fit for the hardest tasks. Some say, the queen
Would have the Gypsies banished with the Jews.
Some say, 'twere better harness them for work.
They'd feed on any filth and save the Spaniard.
Some say—but I must go. 'Twill soon be time
To head the escort. We shall meet again.

BLASCO.

Go, sir, with God (*exit Lopez*). A very proper man,
And soldierly. But, for this banishment
Some men are hot on, it ill pleases me.
The Jews, now (sirs, if any Christian here
Had Jews for ancestors, I blame him not;
We cannot all be Goths of Aragon)—
Jews are not fit for heaven, but on earth
They are most useful. 'Tis the same with mules,

Horses, or oxen, or with any pig
 Except Saint Anthony's. They are useful here
 (The Jews, I mean) though they may go to hell.
 And, look you, useful sins—why Providence
 Sends Jews to do 'em, saving Christian souls.
 The very Gypsies, curbed and harnessed well,
 Would make draught cattle, feed on vermin too,
 Cost less than grazing brutes, and turn bad food
 To handsome carcasses; sweat at the forge
 For little wages, and well drilled and flogged
 Might work like slaves, some Spaniards looking on.
 I deal in plate, and am no priest to say
 What God may mean, save when he means plain sense;
 But when he sent the Gypsies wandering
 In punishment because they sheltered not
 Our Lady and Saint Joseph (and no doubt
 Stole the small ass they fled with into Egypt),
 Why send them here? 'Tis plain he saw the use
 They'd be to Spaniards. Shall we banish them,
 And tell God we know better? 'Tis a sin.
 They talk of vermin; but, sirs, vermin large
 Were made to eat the small, or else to eat
 The noxious rubbish, and picked Gypsy men
 Might serve in war to climb, be killed, and fall
 To make an easy ladder. Once I saw
 A Gypsy sorcerer, at a spring and grasp
 Kill one who came to seize him: talk of strength!
 Nay, swiftness too, for while we crossed ourselves
 He vanished like—say like . . .

JUAN.

A swift black snake,
 Or like a living arrow fledged with will.

BLASCO.

Why, did you see him, pray?

JUAN.

Not then, but now,
 As painters see the many in the one.
 We have a Gypsy in Bedmár whose frame
 Nature compacted with such fine selection,
 'Twould yield a dozen types: all Spanish knights,
 From him who slew Rolando at the pass
 Up to the mighty Cid; all deities,
 Thronging Olympus in fine attitudes;
 Or all hell's heroes whom the poet saw
 Tremble like lions, writhe like demigods.

HOST.

Pause not yet, Juan—more hyperbole!
 Shoot upward still and flare in meteors
 Before thou sink to earth in dull brown fact.

BLASCO.

Nay, give me fact, high shooting suits not me.
 I never stare to look for soaring larks.
 What is this Gypsy?

HOST.

Chieftain of a band,
The Moor's allies, whom full a month ago
Our Duke surprised and brought as captives home.
He needed smiths, and doubtless the brave Moor
Has missed some useful scouts and archers too.
Juan's fantastic pleasure is to watch
These Gypsies forging, and to hold discourse
With this great chief, whom he transforms at will
To sage or warrior, and like the sun
Plays daily at fallacious alchemy,
Turns sand to gold and dewy spider-webs
To myriad rainbows. Still the sand is sand,
And still in sober shade you see the web.
'Tis so, I'll wager, with his Gypsy chief—
A piece of stalwart cunning, nothing more.

JUAN.

No! My invention had been all too poor
To frame this Zarca as I saw him first.
'Twas when they stripped him. In his chieftain's gear
Amidst his men he seemed a royal barb
Followed by wild-maned Andalusian colts.
He had a necklace of a strange device
In finest gold of unknown workmanship,
But delicate as Moorish, fit to kiss
Fedalma's neck, and play in shadows there.
He wore fine mail, a rich-wrought sword and belt,
And on his surcoat black a brodered torch,
A pine-branch flaming, grasped by two dark hands.
But when they stripped him of his ornaments
It was the baubles lost their grace, not he.
His eyes, his mouth, his nostril, all inspired
With scorn that mastered utterance of scorn,
With power to check all rage until it turned
To ordered force, unleashed on chosen prey—
It seemed the soul within him made his limbs
And made them grand. The baubles were all gone.
He stood the more a king, when bared to man.

BLASCO.

Maybe. But nakedness is bad for trade,
And is not decent. Well-wrought metal, sir,
Is not a bauble. Had you seen the camp,
The royal camp at Velez Malaga,
Ponce de Leon and the other dukes,
The king himself and all his thousand knights
For bodyguard, 'twould not have left you breath
To praise a Gypsy thus. A man's a man;
But when you see a king, you see the work
Of many thousand men. King Ferdinand
Bears a fine presence, and hath proper limbs;
But what though he were shrunken as a relic?
You'd see the gold and gems that cased him o'er,
And all the pages round him in brocade,
And all the lords, themselves a sort of kings,

Doing him reverence. That strikes an awe
 Into a common man—especially
 A judge of plate.

Host.

Faith, very wisely said.
 Purge thy speech, Juan. It is over-full
 Of this same Gypsy. Praise the Catholic King.
 And come now, let us see the juggler's skill.

The Plaza Santiago.

'Tis daylight still, but now the golden cross
 Uplifted by the angel on the dome
 Stands rayless in calm color clear-defined
 Against the northern blue; from turrets high
 The flitting splendor sinks with folded wing
 Dark-hid till morning, and the battlements
 Wear soft relenting whiteness mellowed o'er
 By summers generous and winters bland.
 Now in the east the distance casts its veil
 And gazes with a deepening earnestness.
 The old rain-fretted mountains in their robes
 Of shadow-broken gray; the rounded hills
 Reddened with blood of Titans, whose huge limbs,
 Entombed within, feed full the hardy flesh
 Of cactus green and blue broad-sworded aloes;
 The cypress soaring black above the lines
 Of white court-walls; the jointed sugar-canes
 Pale-golden with their feathers motionless
 In the warm quiet:—all thought-teaching form
 Utters itself in firm unshimmering hues.
 For the great rock has screened the westering sun
 That still on plains beyond streams vaporous gold
 Among the branches; and within Bedmár
 Has come the time of sweet serenity
 When color glows unglittering, and the soul
 Of visible things shows silent happiness,
 As that of lovers trusting though apart.
 The ripe-cheeked fruits, the crimson-petalled flowers;
 The wingèd life that pausing seems a gem
 Cunningly carven on the dark green leaf;
 The face of man with hues supremely blent
 To difference fine as of a voice 'mid sounds:—
 Each lovely light-dipped thing seems to emerge
 Flushed gravely from baptismal sacrament.
 All beauteous existence rests, yet wakes,
 Lies still, yet conscious, with clear open eyes
 And gentle breath and mild suffusèd joy.
 'Tis day, but day that falls like melody
 Repeated on a string with graver tones—
 Tones such as linger in a long farewell.

The Plaza widens in the passive air—
 The Plaza Santiago, where the church,
 A mosque converted, shows an eyeless face
 Red-checkered, faded, doing penance still—

Bearing with Moorish arch the imaged saint,
 Apostle, baron, Spanish warrior,
 Whose charger's hoofs trample the turbaned dead,
 Whose banner with the Cross, the bloody sword
 Flashes athwart the Moslem's glazing eye,
 And mocks his trust in Allah who forsakes.
 Up to the church the Plaça gently slopes,
 In shape most like the pious palmer's shell,
 Girdled with low white houses; high above
 Tower the strong fortress and sharp-angled wall
 And well-flanked castle gate. From o'er the roofs,
 And from the shadowed pátios cool, there spreads
 The breath of flowers and aromatic leaves
 Soothing the sense with bliss indefinite—
 A baseless hope, a glad presentiment,
 That curves the lip more softly, fills the eye
 With more indulgent beam. And so it soothes,
 So gently sways the pulses of the crowd
 Who make a zone about the central spot
 Chosen by Roldan for his theatre.
 Maids with arched eyebrows, delicate-pencilled, dark,
 Fold their round arms below the kerchief full;
 Men shoulder little girls; and grandames gray,
 But muscular still, hold babies on their arms;
 While mothers keep the stout-legged boys in front
 Against their skirts, as old Greek pictures show
 The Glorious Mother with the Boy divine.
 Youths keep the places for themselves, and roll
 Large lazy eyes, and call recumbent dogs
 (For reasons deep below the reach of thought).
 The old men cough with purpose, wish to hint
 Wisdom within that cheapens jugglery,
 Maintain a neutral air, and knit their brows
 In observation. None are quarrelsome,
 Noisy, or very merry; for their blood
 Moves slowly into fervor—they rejoice
 Like those dark birds that sweep with heavy wing,
 Cheering their mates with melancholy cries.

But now the gilded balls begin to play
 In rhythmic numbers, ruled by practice fine
 Of eye and muscle: all the juggler's form
 Consents harmonious in swift-gliding change,
 Easily forward stretched or backward bent
 With lightest step and movement circular
 Round a fixed point: 'tis not the old Roldan now,
 The dull, hard, weary, miserable man,
 The soul all parched to languid appetite
 And memory of desire: 'tis wondrous force
 That moves in combination multiiform
 Towards conscious ends: 'tis Roldan glorious,
 Holding all eyes like any meteor,
 King of the moment save when Annibal
 Divides the scene and plays the comic part,
 Gazing with blinking glances up and down
 Dancing and throwing nought and catching it,
 With mimicry as merry as the tasks
 Of penance-working shades in Tartarus.

Pablo stands passive, and a space apart,
 Holding a viol, waiting for command.
 Music must not be wasted, but must rise
 As needed climax: and the audience
 Is growing with late comers. Juan now,
 And the familiar Host, with Blasco broad,
 Find way made gladly to the inmost round
 Studded with heads. Lorenzo knits the crowd
 Into one family by showing all
 Good-will and recognition. Juan casts
 His large and rapid-measuring glance around;
 But—with faint quivering, transient as a breath
 Shaking a flame—his eyes make sudden pause
 Where by the jutting angle of a street
 Castle-ward leading, stands a female form,
 A kerchief pale square-drooping o'er the brow,
 About her shoulders dim brown serge—in garb
 Most like a peasant woman from the vale,
 Who might have lingered after marketing
 To see the show. What thrill mysterious,
 Ray-borne from orb to orb of conscious eyes,
 The swift observing sweep of Juan's glance
 Arrests an instant, then with prompting fresh
 Diverts it lastingly? He turns at once
 To watch the gilded balls, and nod and smile
 At little round Pepita, blondest maid
 In all Bedmár—Pepita, fair yet flecked,
 Saucy of lip and nose, of hair as red
 As breasts of robins stepping on the snow—
 Who stands in front with little tapping feet,
 And baby-dimpled hands that hide enclosed
 Those sleeping crickets, the dark castanets.
 But soon the gilded balls have ceased to play
 And Annibal is leaping through the hoops,
 That turn to twelve, meeting him as he flies
 In the swift circle. Shuddering he leaps,
 But with each spring flies swift and swifter still
 To loud and louder shouts, while the great hoops
 Are changed to smaller. Now the crowd is fired.
 The motion swift, the living victim urged,
 The imminent failure and repeated scape
 Hurry all pulses and intoxicate
 With subtle wine of passion many-mixt.
 'Tis all about a monkey leaping hard
 Till near to gasping; but it serves as well
 As the great circus or arena dire,
 Where these are lacking. Roldan cautiously
 Slackens the leaps and lays the hoops to rest,
 And Annibal retires with reeling brain
 And backward stagger—pity, he could not smile!

Now Roldan spreads his carpet, now he shows
 Strange metamorphoses: the pebble black
 Changes to whitest egg within his hand;
 A staring rabbit, with retreating ears,
 Is swallowed by the air and vanishes;
 He tells men's thoughts about the shaken dice,

Their secret choosings; makes the white beans pass
 With causeless act sublime from cup to cup
 Turned empty on the ground—diablerie
 That pales the girls and puzzles all the boys:
 These tricks are samples, hinting to the town
 Roldan's great mastery. He tumbles next,
 And Annibal is called to mock each feat
 With arduous comicality and save
 By rule romantic the great public mind
 (And Roldan's body) from too serious strain.

But with the tumbling, lest the feats should fail,
 And so need veiling in a haze of sound,
 Pablo awakes the viol and the bow—
 The masculine bow that draws the woman's heart
 From out the strings and makes them cry, yearn, plead,
 Tremble, exult, with mystic union
 Of joy acute and tender suffering.
 To play the viol and discreetly mix
 Alternate with the bow's keen biting tones
 The throb responsive to the finger's touch,
 Was rarest skill that Pablo half had caught
 From an old blind and wandering Catalan;
 The other half was rather heritage
 From treasure stored by generations past
 In winding chambers of receptive sense.

The wingèd sounds exalt the thick-pressed crowd
 With a new pulse in common, blending all
 The gazing life into one larger soul
 With dimly widened consciousness: as waves
 In heightened movement tell of waves far off.
 And the light changes; westward stationed clouds,
 The sun's ranged outposts, luminous message spread,
 Rousing quiescent things to doff their shade
 And show themselves as added audience.
 Now Pablo, letting fall the eager bow,
 Solicits softer murmurs from the strings,
 And now above them pours a wondrous voice
 (Such as Greek reapers heard in Sicily)
 With wounding rapture in it, like love's arrows;
 And clear upon clear air as colored gems
 Dropped in a crystal cup of water pure,
 Fall words of sadness, simple, lyrical:

*Spring comes hither,
 Buds the rose;
 Roses wither,
 Sweet spring goes.
 Ojalà, would she carry me!*

*Summer soars—
 Wide-winged day
 White light pours,
 Flies away.
 Ojalà, would he carry me!*

*Soft winds blow,
Westward born,
Onward go
Toward the morn.
Ojalá, would they carry me!*

*Sweet birds sing
O'er the graves,
Then take wing
O'er the waves.
Ojalá, would they carry me!*

When the voice paused and left the viol's note
To plead forsaken, 'twas as when a cloud
Hiding the sun, makes all the leaves and flowers
Shiver. But when with measured change the strings
Had taught regret new longing, clear again,
Welcome as hope recovered, flowed the voice,

*Warm whispering through the slender olive leaves
Came to me a gentle sound,
Whispering of a secret found
In the clear sunshine 'mid the golden sheaves:
Said it was sleeping for me in the morn,
Called it gladness, called it joy,
Drew me on—"Come hither, boy"—
To where the blue wings rested on the corn.
I thought the gentle sound had whispered true—
Thought the little heaven mine,
Leaned to clutch the thing divine,
And saw the blue wings melt within the blue.*

The long notes linger on the trembling air,
With subtle penetration enter all
The myriad corridors of the passionate soul,
Message-like spread, and answering action rouse.
Not angular jigs that warm the chilly limbs
In hoary northern mists, but action curved
To soft andante strains pitched plaintively.
Vibrations sympathetic stir all limbs:
Old men live backward in their dancing prime,
And move in memory; small legs and arms
With pleasant agitation purposeless
Go up and down like pretty fruits in gales.
All long in common for the expressive act
Yet wait for it; as in the olden time
Men waited for the bard to tell their thought.
"The dance!" "the dance!" is shouted all around.
Now Pablo lifts the bow, Pepita now,
Ready as bird that sees the sprinkled corn,
When Juan nods and smiles, puts forth her foot
And lifts her arm to wake the castanets.
Juan advances, too, from out the ring
And bends to quit his lute; for now the scene
Is empty; Roldan weary, gathers pence,
Followed by Annibal with purse and stick.
The carpet lies a colored isle untrod,
Inviting feet: "The dance, the dance," resounds,

The bow entreats with slow melodic strain,
And all the air with expectation yearns.

Sudden, with gliding motion like a flame
That through dim vapor makes a path of glory,
A figure lithe, all white and saffron-robed,
Flashed right across the circle, and now stood
With ripened arms uplift and regal head,
Like some tall flower whose dark and intense heart
Lies half within a tulip-tinted cup.

Juan stood fixed and pale; Pepita stepped
Backward within the ring: the voices fell
From shouts insistent to more passive tones
Half meaning welcome, half astonishment.
"Lady Fedalma!—will she dance for us?"

But she, sole swayed by impulse passionate,
Feeling all life was music and all eyes
The warming, quickening light that music makes,
Moved as, in dance religious, Miriam,
When on the Red Sea shore she raised her voice
And led the chorus of the people's joy;
Or as the Trojan maids that reverent sang
Watching the sorrow-crowned Hecuba:
Moved in slow curves voluminous, gradual,
Feeling and action flowing into one,
In Eden's natural taintless marriage-bond;
Ardently modest, sensuously pure,
With young delight that wonders at itself
And throbs as innocent as opening flowers,
Knowing not comment—soilless, beautiful.
The spirit in her gravely glowing face
With sweet community informs her limbs,
Filling their fine gradation with the breath
Of virgin majesty; as full vowelled words
Are new impregnate with the master's thought.
Even the chance-strayed delicate tendrils black,
That backward 'scape from out her wreathing hair—
Even the pliant folds that cling transverse
When with obliquely soaring bend altern
She seems a goddess quitting earth again—
Gather expression—a soft undertone
And resonance exquisite from the grand chord
Of her harmoniously bodied soul.

At first a reverential silence guards
The eager senses of the gazing crowd:
They hold their breath, and live by seeing her.
But soon the admiring tension finds relief—
Sighs of delight, applausive murmurs low,
And stirrings gentle as of eared corn
Or seed-bent grasses, when the ocean's breath
Spreads landward. Even Juan is impelled
By the swift-travelling movement: fear and doubt
Give way before the hurrying energy;
He takes his lute and strikes in fellowship,
Filling more full the rill of melody
Raised ever and anon to clearest flood

By Pablo's voice, that dies away too soon,
 Like the sweet blackbird's fragmentary chant,
 Yet wakes again, with varying rise and fall,
 In songs that seem emergent memories
 Prompting brief utterance—little *cañcions*
 And villancicos, Andalusia-born.

PABLO (*sings*).

*It was in the prime
 Of the sweet Spring-time.
 In the linnet's throat
 Trembled the love-note,
 And the love-stirred air
 Thrilled the blossoms there.
 Little shadows danced
 Each a tiny elf,
 Happy in large light
 And the thinnest self.*

*It was but a minute
 In a far-off Spring,
 But each gentle thing,
 Sweetly-wooing linnet,
 Soft-thrilled hawthorn-tree,
 Happy shadowy elf
 With the thinnest self,
 Live still on in me.
 O the sweet, sweet prime
 Of the past Spring-time.*

And still the light is changing: high above
 Float soft pink clouds; others with deeper *flush*
 Stretch like flamingoes bending toward the south
 Comes a more solemn brilliance o'er the sky,
 A meaning more intense upon the air—
 The inspiration of the dying day.
 And Juan now, when Pablo's notes subside,
 Soothes the regretful ear, and breaks the *pause*
 With masculine voice in deep antiphony.

JUAN (*sings*).

*Day is dying! Float, O song,
 Down the westward river,
 Requiem chanting to the Day—
 Day, the mighty Giver,
 Pierced by shafts of Time he bleeds,
 Melted rubies sending
 Through the river and the sky,
 Earth and heaven blending;
 All the long-drawn earthy banks
 Up to cloud-land lifting:
 Slow between them drifts the swan,
 'Twixt two heavens drifting.
 Wings half open, like a flow'r
 Inly deeper flushing,
 Neck and breast as virgin's *pure*—
 Virgin proudly blushing.*

*Day is dying! Float, O swan,
Down the ruby river;
Follow, song, in requiem
To the mighty Giver.*

The exquisite hour, the ardor of the crowd,
The strains more plenteous, and the gathering might
Of action passionate where no effort is,
But self's poor gates open to rushing power
That blends the inward ebb and outward vast—
All gathering influences culminate
And urge Fedalma. Earth and heaven seem one,
Life a glad trembling on the outer edge
Of unknown rapture. Swifter now she moves,
Filling the measure with a double beat
And widening circle; now she seems to glow
With more declared presence, glorified.
Circling, she lightly bends and lifts on high
The multitudinous-sounding tambourine,
And makes it ring and boom, then lifts it higher
Stretching her left arm beauteous; now the crowd
Exultant shouts, forgetting poverty
In the rich moment of possessing her.

But sudden, at one point, the exultant throng
Is pushed and hustled, and then thrust apart:
Something approaches—something cuts the ring
Of jubilant idlers—startling as a streak
From alien wounds across the blooming flesh
Of careless sporting childhood. 'Tis the band
Of Gypsy prisoners. Soldiers lead the van
And make sparse flanking guard, aloof surveyed
By gallant Lopez, stringent in command.
The Gypsies chained in couples, all save one,
Walk in dark file with grand bare legs and arms
And savage melancholy in their eyes
That star-like gleam from out black clouds of hair
Now they are full in sight, and now they stretch
Right to the centre of the open space.
Fedalma now, with gentle wheeling sweep
Returning, like the loveliest of the Hours
Strayed from her sisters, truant lingering,
Faces again the centre, swings again
The uplifted tambourine. . . .

When lo! with sound
Stupendous throbbing, solemn as a voice
Sent by the invisible choir of all the dead,
Tolls the great passing bell that calls to prayer
For souls departed: at the mighty beat
It seems the light sinks awe-struck—'tis the note
Of the sun's burial; speech and action pause;
Religious silence and the holy sign
Of everlasting memories (the sign
Of death that turned to more diffusive life)
Pass o'er the Praça. Little children gaze
With lips apart, and feel the unknown god;
And the most men and women pray. Not all.
The soldiers pray; the Gypsies stand unmoved

As pagan statues with proud level gaze.
 But he who wears a solitary chain
 Heading the file, has turned to face Fedalma.
 She motionless, with arm uplifted, guards
 The tambourine aloft (lest, sudden-lowered,
 Its trivial jingle mar the duteous pause),
 Reverses the general prayer, but prays not, stands
 With level glance meeting that Gypsy's eyes,
 That seem to her the sadness of the world
 Rebuking her, the great bell's hidden thought
 Now first unveiled—the sorrows unredeemed
 Of races outcast, scorned, and wandering.
 Why does he look at her? why she at him?
 As if the meeting light between their eyes
 Made permanent union? His deep-knit brow,
 Inflated nostril, scornful lip compressed,
 Seem a dark hieroglyph of coming fate
 Written before her. Father Isidor
 Had terrible eyes and was her enemy;
 She knew it and defied him; all her soul
 Rounded and hardened in its separateness
 When they encountered. But this prisoner—
 This Gypsy, passing, gazing casually—
 Was he her enemy too? She stood all quelled,
 The impetuous joy that hurried in her veins
 Seemed backward rushing turned to chilliest awe,
 Uneasy wonder, and a vague self-doubt.
 The minute brief stretched measureless, dream-filled
 By a dilated new-fraught consciousness.

Now it was gone; the pious murmur ceased,
 The Gypsies all moved onward at command
 And careless noises blent confusedly.
 But the ring closed again, and many ears
 Waited for Pablo's music, many eyes
 Turned towards the carpet: it lay bare and dim,
 Twilight was there—the bright Fedalma gone.

△ A handsome room in the Castle. On a table a rich jewel-casket.

Silva had doffed his mail and with it all
 The heavier harness of his warlike cares.
 He had not seen Fedalma; miser-like
 He hoarded through the hour a costlier joy
 By longing oft-repressed. Now it was earned;
 And with observance wonted he would send
 To ask admission. Spanish gentlemen
 Who wooed fair dames of noble ancestry
 Did homage with rich tunics and slashed sleeves
 And outward-surgling linen's costly snow;
 With broidered scarf transverse, and rosary
 Handsomely wrought to fit high-blooded prayer;
 So hinting in how deep respect they held
 That self they threw before their lady's feet.
 And Silva—that Fedalma's rate should stand
 No jot below the highest, that her love
 Might seem to all the royal gift it was—
 Turned every trifle in his mien and garb

To scrupulous language, uttering to the world
 That since she loved him he went carefully,
 Bearing a thing so precious in his hand.
 A man of high-wrought strain, fastidious
 In his acceptance, dreading all delight
 That speedy dies and turns to carrion:
 His senses much exacting, deep instilled
 With keen imagination's airy needs;—
 Like strong-limbed monsters studded o'er with eyes,
 Their hunger checked by overwhelming vision,
 Or that fierce lion in symbolic dream
 Snatched from the ground by wings and new-endowed
 With a man's thought-propelled relenting heart.
 Silva was both the lion and the man;
 First hesitating shrank, then fiercely sprang,
 Or having sprung, turned pallid at his deed
 And loosed the prize, paying his blood for nought.
 A nature half-transformed, with qualities
 That oft bewrayed each other, elements
 Not blent but struggling, breeding strange effects,
 Passing the reckoning of his friends or foes.
 Haughty and generous, grave and passionate;
 With tidal moments of devoutest awe,
 Sinking anon to farthest ebb of doubt;
 Deliberating ever, till the sting
 Of a recurrent ardor made him rush
 Right against reasons that himself had drilled
 And marshalled painfully. A spirit framed
 Too proudly special for obedience,
 Too subtly pondering for mastery:
 Born of a goddess with a mortal sire,
 Heir of flesh-fettered, weak divinity,
 Doom-gifted with long resonant consciousness
 And perilous heightening of the sentient soul.
 But look less curiously: life itself
 May not express us all, may leave the worst
 And the best too, like tunes in mechanism
 Never awaked. In various catalogues
 Objects stand variously. Silva stands
 As a young Spaniard, handsome, noble, brave,
 With titles many, high in pedigree;
 Or, as a nature quiveringly poised
 In reach of storms, whose qualities may turn
 To murdered virtues that still walk as ghosts
 Within the shuddering soul and shriek remorse;
 Or, as a lover. . . . In the screening time
 Of purple blossoms, when the petals crowd
 And softly crush like cherub cheeks in heaven,
 Who thinks of greenly withered fruit and worms?
 O the warm southern spring is beauteous!
 And in love's spring all good seems possible:
 No threats, all promise, brooklets ripple full
 And bathe the rushes, vicious crawling things
 Are pretty eggs, the sun shines graciously
 And parches not, the silent rain beats warm
 As childhood's kisses, days are young and grow,
 And earth seems in its sweet beginning time

Fresh made for two who live in Paradise.
 Silva is in love's spring, its freshness breathed
 Within his soul along the dusty ways
 While marching homeward; 'tis around him now
 As in a garden fenced in for delight,—
 And he may seek delight. Smiling he lifts
 A whistle from his belt, but lets it fall
 Ere it has reached his lips, jarred by the sound
 Of ushers' knocking, and a voice that craves
 Admission for the Prior of San Domingo.

PRIOR (*entering*).

You look perturbed, my son. I thrust myself
 Between you and some beckoning intent
 That wears a face more smiling than my own.

DON SILVA.

Father, enough that you are here. I wait,
 As always, your commands—nay, should have sought
 An early audience.

PRIOR.

To give, I trust,
 Good reasons for your change of policy?

DON SILVA.

Strong reasons, father.

PRIOR.

Ay, but are they good?
 I have known reasons strong, but strongly evil.

DON SILVA.

'Tis possible. I but deliver mine
 To your strict judgment. Late despatches sent
 With urgency by the Count of Bavien,
 No hint on my part prompting, with besides
 The testified concurrence of the king
 And our Grand Master, have made peremptory
 The course which else had been but rational.
 Without the forces furnished by allies
 The siege of Guadix would be madness. More,
 El Zagal has his eyes upon Bedmár:
 Let him attempt it: in three weeks from hence
 The Master and the Lord of Aguilar
 Will bring their forces. We shall catch the Moors.
 The last gleaned clusters of their bravest men,
 As in a trap. You have my reasons, father.

PRIOR.

And they sound well. But free-tongued rumor adds
 A pregnant supplement—in substance this:
 That inclination snatches arguments
 To make indulgence seem judicious choice;
 That you, commanding in God's Holy War,
 Lift prayers to Satan to retard the fight
 And give you time for feasting—wait a siege,

Call daring enterprise impossible,
 Because you'd marry! You, a Spanish duke,
 Christ's general, would marry like a clown,
 Who, selling fodder dearer for the war,
 Is all the merrier; nay, like the brutes,
 Who know no awe to check their appetite,
 Coupling 'mid heaps of slain, while still in front
 The battle rages.

DON SILVA.

Rumor on your lips

Is eloquent, father.

PRIOR.

Is she true?

DON SILVA.

Perhaps.

I seek to justify my public acts
 And not my private joy. Before the world
 Enough if I am faithful in command,
 Betray not by my deeds, swerve from no task
 My knightly vows constrain me to: herein
 I ask all men to test me.

PRIOR.

Knightly vows?

Is it by their constraint that you must marry?

DON SILVA.

Marriage is not a breach of them. I use
 A sanctioned liberty. . . your pardon, father,
 I need not teach you what the Church decrees.
 But facts may weaken texts, and so dry up
 The fount of eloquence. The Church relaxed
 Our Order's rule before I took the vows.

PRIOR.

Ignoble liberty! you snatch your rule
 From what God tolerates, not what he loves?—
 Inquire what lowest offering may suffice,
 Cheapen it meanly to an obolus,
 Buy, and then count the coin left in your purse
 For your debauch?—Measure obedience
 By scantest powers of brethren whose frail flesh
 Our Holy Church indulges?—Ask great Law,
 The rightful Sovereign of the human soul,
 For what it pardons, not what it commands?
 O fallen knighthood, penitent of high vows,
 Asking a charter to degrade itself!
 Such poor apology of rules relaxed
 Blunts not suspicion of that doubleness
 Your enemies tax you with.

DON SILVA.

Oh, for the rest,

Conscience is harder than our enemies,

Knows more, accuses with more nicety,
Nor needs to question Rumor if we fall
Below the perfect model of our thought.
I fear no outward arbiter.—You smile?

PRIOR.

Ay, at the contrast 'twixt your portraiture
And the true image of your conscience, shown
As now I see it in your acts. I see
A drunken sentinel who gives alarm
At his own shadow, but when scalers snatch
His weapon from his hand smiles idiot-like
At games he's dreaming of.

DON SILVA.

A parable!

The husk is rough—holds something bitter, doubtless.

PRIOR.

Oh, the husk gapes with meaning over-ripe.
You boast a conscience that controls your deeds,
Watches your knightly armor, guards your rank
From stain of treachery—you, helpless slave,
Whose will lies nerveless in the clutch of lust—
Of blind mad passion—passion itself most helpless,
Storm-driven, like the monsters of the sea.
O famous conscience!

DON SILVA.

Pause there! Leave unsaid

Aught that will match that text. More were too much,
Even from holy lips. I own no love
But such as guards my honor, since it guards
Hers whom I love! I suffer no foul words
To stain the gift I lay before her feet;
And, being hers, my honor is more safe.

PRIOR.

Verse-makers' talk! fit for a world of rhymes,
Where facts are feigned to tickle idle ears,
Where good and evil play at tournament
And end in amity—a world of lies—
A carnival of words where every year
Stale falsehoods serve fresh men. Your honor safe?
What honor has a man with double bonds?
Honor is shifting as the shadows are
To souls that turn their passions into laws.
A Christian knight who weds an infidel . . .

DON SILVA (*fiercely*).

An infidel!

PRIOR

May one day spurn the Cross,
And call that honor!—one day find his sword
Stained with his brother's blood, and call that honor!
Apostates' honor?—harlots' chastity!
Renegades' faithfulness?—Isca-riot's!

DON SILVA.

Strong words and burning; but they scorch not me.
Fedalma is a daughter of the Church—
Has been baptized and nurtured in the faith.

PRIOR.

Ay, as a thousand Jewesses, who yet
Are brides of Satan in a robe of flames.

DON SILVA.

Fedalma is no Jewess, bears no marks
That tell of Hebrew blood.

PRIOR.

She bears the marks
Of races unbaptized, that never bowed
Before the holy signs, were never moved
By stirrings of the sacramental gifts.

DON SILVA (*scornfully*).

Holy accusers practise palmistry,
And, other witness lacking, read the skin.

PRIOR.

I read a record deeper than the skin.
What! Shall the trick of nostrils and of lips
Descend through generations, and the soul
That moves within our frame like God in worlds—
Convulsing, urging, melting, withering—
Imprint no record, leave no documents,
Of her great history? Shall men bequeath
The fancies of their palate to their sons,
And shall the shudder of restraining awe,
The slow-wept tears of contrite memory,
Faith's prayerful labor, and the food divine
Of fasts ecstatic—shall these pass away
Like wind upon the waters, tracklessly?
Shall the mere curl of eyelashes remain,
And god-enshrining symbols leave no trace
Of tremors reverent?—That maiden's blood
Is as unchristian as the leopard's.

DON SILVA.

Say,
Unchristian as the Blessed Virgin's blood
Before the angel spoke the word, "All hail!"

PRIOR (*smiling bitterly*).

Said I not truly? See, your passion weaves
Already blasphemies!

DON SILVA.

'Tis you provoke them.

PRIOR.

I strive, as still the Holy Spirit strives,
To move the will perverse. But, failing this,

God commands other means to save our blood,
To save Castilian glory—nay, to save
The name of Christ from blot of traitorous deeds.

DON SILVA.

Of traitorous deeds! Age, kindred, and your cowl,
Give an ignoble license to your tongue.
As for your threats, fulfil them at your peril.
'Tis you, not I, will gibbet our great name
To rot in infamy. If I am strong
In patience now, trust me, I can be strong
Then in defiance.

PRIOR.

Miserable man!

Your strength will turn to anguish, like the strength
Of fallen angels. Can you change your blood?
You are a Christian, with the Christian awe
In every vein. A Spanish noble, born
To serve your people and your people's faith.
Strong, are you? Turn your back upon the Cross—
Its shadow is before you. Leave your place:
Quit the great ranks of knighthood: you will walk
Forever with a tortured double self,
A self that will be hungry while you feast,
Will blush with shame while you are glorified,
Will feel the ache and chill of desolation,
Even in the very bosom of your love.
Mate yourself with this woman, fit for what?
To make the sport of Moorish palaces,
A lewd Herodias . . .

DON SILVA.

Stop! no other man,
Priest though he were, had had his throat left free
For passage of those words. I would have clutched
His serpent's neck, and flung him out to hell!
A monk must needs defile the name of love:
He knows it but as tempting devils paint it.
You think to scare my love from its resolve
With arbitrary consequences, strained
By rancorous effort from the thinnest moles
Of possibility?—cite hideous lists
Of sins irrelevant, to frighten me
With bugbears' names, as women fright a child?
Poor pallid wisdom, taught by inference
From blood-drained life, where phantom terrors rule,
And all achievement is to leave undone!
Paint the day dark, make sunshine cold to me,
Abolish the earth's fairness, prove it all
A fiction of my eyes—then, after that,
Profane Fedalma.

PRIOR.

O there is no need:

She has profaned herself. Go, raving man,
And see her dancing now. Go, see your bride

Flaunting her beauties grossly in the gaze
Of vulgar idlers—eking out the show
Made in the Plaça by a mountebank.
I hinder you no farther.

DON SILVA.

It is false!

PRIOR.

Go, prove it false, then.

[Father Isidor
Drew on his cowl and turned away. The face
That flashed anathemas, in swift eclipse
Seemed Silva's vanished confidence. In haste
He rushed unsignalled through the corridor
To where the Duchess once, Fedalma now,
Had residence retired from din of arms—
Knocked, opened, found all empty—said
With muffled voice, "Fedalma!"—called more loud,
More oft on Iñez, the old trusted nurse—
Then searched the terrace-garden, calling still,
But heard no answering sound, and saw no face
Save painted faces staring all unmoved
By agitated tones. He hurried back,
Giving half-conscious orders as he went
To page and usher, that they straight should seek
Lady Fedalma; then with stinging shame
Wished himself silent; reached again the room
Where still the Father's menace seemed to hang
Thickening the air; snatched cloak and plumed hat,
And grasped, not knowing why, his poniard's hilt;
Then checked himself and said:—]

If he spoke truth!

To know were wound enough—to see the truth
Were fire upon the wound. It must be false!
His hatred saw amiss, or snatched mistake
In other men's report. I am a fool!
But where can she be gone? gone secretly?
And in my absence? Oh, she meant no wrong!
I am a fool!—But where can she be gone?
With only Iñez? Oh, she meant no wrong!
I swear she never meant it. There's no wrong
But she would make it momentary right
By innocence in doing it. . . .

And yet,
What is our certainty? Why, knowing all
That is not secret. Mighty confidence!
One pulse of Time makes the base hollow—sends
The towering certainty we built so high
Toppling in fragments meaningless. What is—
What will be—must be—pooh! they wait the key
Of that which is not yet; all other keys
Are made of our conjectures, take their sense
From humors fooled by hope, or by despair.
Know what is good? O God, we know not yet

If bliss itself is not young misery
With fangs swift growing. . . .

But some outward harm
May even now be hurting, grieving her.
Oh! I must search—face shame—if shame be there.
Here, Perez! hasten to Don Alvar—tell him
Lady Fedalma must be sought—is lost—
Has met, I fear, some mischance. He must send
Towards divers points. I go myself to seek
First in the town. . . .

[As Perez oped the door,
Then moved aside for passage of the Duke,
Fedalma entered, cast away the cloud
Of serge and linen, and outbeaming bright,
Advanced a pace towards Silva—but then paused,
For he had started and retreated; she,
Quick and responsive as the subtle air
To change in him, divined that she must wait
Until they were alone: they stood and looked.
Within the Duke was struggling confluence
Of feelings manifold—pride, anger, dread,
Meeting in stormy rush with sense secure
That she was present, with the new-stilled thirst
Of gazing love, with trust inevitable
As in beneficent virtues of the light
And all earth's sweetness, that Fedalma's soul
Was free from blemishing purpose. Yet proud wrath
Leaped in dark flood above the purer stream
That strove to drown it: Anger seeks its prey—
Something to tear with sharp-edged tooth and claw,
Likes not to go off hungry, leaving Love
To feast on milk and honeycomb at will.
Silva's heart said, he must be happy soon,
She being there; but to be happy—first
He must be angry, having cause. Yet love
Shot like a stifled cry of tenderness
All through the harshness he would fain have given
To the dear word,]

DON SILVA.

Fedalma!

FEDALMA.

O my lord!
You are come back, and I was wandering!

DON SILVA (*coldly, but with suppressed agitation*).
You meant I should be ignorant.

FEDALMA.

Oh no,
I should have told you after—not before,
Lest you should hinder me.

DON SILVA.

Then my known wish
Can make no hinderance?

FEDALMA (*archly*).

That depends
On what the wish may be. You wished me once
Not to uncage the birds. I meant to obey:
But in a moment something—something stronger,
Forced me to let them out. It did no harm.
They all came back again—the silly birds!
I told you, after.

DON SILVA (*with haughty coldness*).

Will you tell me now
What was the prompting stronger than my wish
That made you wander?

FEDALMA (*advancing a step towards him, with a sudden look of anxiety*).

Are you angry?

DON SILVA (*smiling bitterly*).

Angry?
A man deep-wounded may feel too much pain
To feel much anger.

FEDALMA (*still more anxiously*).

You—deep-wounded?

DON SILVA.

Yes!

Have I not made your place and dignity
The very heart of my ambition? You—
No enemy could do it—you alone
Can strike it mortally.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, nay.
Has some one told you false? I only went
To see the world with Iñez—see the town,
The people, everything. It was no harm.
I did not mean to dance: it happened so
At last . . .

DON SILVA.

O God, it's true then!—true that you,
A maiden nurtured as rare flowers are,
The very air of heaven sifted fine
Lest any mote should mar your purity,
Have flung yourself out on the dusty way
For common eyes to see your beauty soiled!
You own it true—you danced upon the Plaza?

FEDALMA (*proudly*).

Yes, it is true. I was not wrong to dance.
The air was filled with music, with a song
That seemed the voice of the sweet eventide—
The glowing light entering through eye and ear—
That seemed our love—mine, yours—they are but one—

Trembling through all my limbs, as fervent words
 Tremble within my soul and must be spoken.
 And all the people felt a common joy
 And shouted for the dance. A brightness soft
 As of the angels moving down to see
 Illumined the broad space. The joy, the life
 Around, within me, were one heaven: I longed
 To blend them visibly: I longed to dance
 Before the people—be as mounting flame
 To all that burned within them! Nay, I danced;
 There was no longing: I but did the deed
 Being moved to do it.

(As FEDALMA speaks, she and DON SILVA are gradually drawn nearer to each other.)

Oh! I seemed new-waked
 To life in unison with a multitude—
 Feeling my soul upborne by all their souls,
 Floating within their gladness! Soon I lost
 All sense of separateness: Fedalma died
 As a star dies, and melts into the light.
 I was not, but joy was, and love and triumph.
 Nay, my dear lord, I never could do ought
 But I must feel you present. And once done,
 Why, you must love it better than your wish.
 I pray you, say so—say, it was not wrong!

(While FEDALMA has been making this last appeal, they have gradually come close together, and at last embrace.)

DON SILVA (*holding her hands*).

Dangerous rebel! if the world without
 Were pure as that within . . . but 'tis a book
 Wherein you only read the poesy
 And miss all wicked meanings. Hence the need
 For trust—obedience—call it what you will—
 Towards him whose life will be your guard—towards me
 Who now am soon to be your husband.

FEDALMA.

Yes!

That very thing that when I am your wife
 I shall be something different,—shall be
 I know not what, a Duchess with new thoughts—
 For nobles never think like common men,
 Nor wives like maidens (Oh, you wot not yet
 How much I note, with all my ignorance)—
 That very thing has made me more resolve
 To have my will before I am your wife.
 How can the Duchess ever satisfy
 Fedalma's unwed eyes? and so to-day
 I scolded Iñez till she cried and went.

DON SILVA.

It was a guilty weakness: she knows well
 That since you pleaded to be left more free

From tedious tendance and control of dames
Whose rank matched better with your destiny,
Her charge—my trust—was weightier.

FEDALMA.

Nay, my lord,
You must not blame her, dear old nurse. She cried.
Why, you would have consented too, at last.
I said such things! I was resolved to go,
And see the streets, the shops, the men at work,
The women, little children—everything,
Just as it is when nobody looks on.
And I have done it! We were out four hours.
I feel so wise.

DON SILVA.

Had you but seen the town,
You innocent naughtiness, not shown yourself—
Shown yourself dancing—you bewilder me!—
Frustrate my judgment with strange negatives
That seem like poverty, and yet are wealth
In precious womanliness, beyond the dower
Of other women: wealth in virgin gold,
Outweighing all their petty currency.
You daring modesty! You shrink no more
From gazing men than from the gazing flowers
That, dreaming sunshine, open as you pass.

FEDALMA.

No, I should like the world to look at me
With eyes of love that make a second day.
I think your eyes would keep the life in me
Though I had nought to feed on else. Their blue
Is better than the heavens'—holds more love
For me, Fedalma—is a little heaven
For this one little world that looks up now.

DON SILVA.

O precious little world! you make the heaven
As the earth makes the sky. But, dear, all eyes,
Though looking even on you, have not a glance
That cherishes . . .

FEDALMA.

Ah no, I meant to tell you—
Tell how my dancing ended with a pang.
There came a man, one among many more,
But *he* came first, with iron on his limbs.
And when the bell tolled, and the people prayed,
And I stood pausing—then he looked at me,
O Silva, such a man! I thought he rose
From the dark place of long-imprisoned souls,
To say that Christ had never come to them.
It was a look to shame a seraph's joy,
And make him sad in heaven. It found me there—
Seemed to have travelled far to find me there
And grasp me—claim this festal life of mine

As heritage of sorrow, chill my blood
 With the cold iron of some unknown bonds.
 The gladness hurrying full within my veins
 Was sudden frozen, and I danced no more.
 But seeing you let loose the stream of joy,
 Mingling the present with the sweetest past.
 Yet, Silva, still I see him. Who is he?
 Who are those prisoners with him? Are they Moors?

DON SILVA.

No, they are Gypsies, strong and cunning knaves,
 A double gain to us by the Moors' loss:
 The man you mean—their chief—is an ally
 The infidel will miss. His look might chase
 A herd of monks, and make them fly more swift
 Than from St. Jerome's lion. Such vague fear,
 Such bird-like tremors when that savage glance
 Turned full upon you in your height of joy
 Was natural, was not worth emphasis.
 Forget it, dear. This hour is worth whole days
 When we are sundered. Danger urges us
 To quick resolve.

FEDALMA.

What danger? what resolve?
 I never felt chill shadow in my heart
 Until this sunset.

DON SILVA.

A dark enmity
 Plots how to sever us. And our defence
 Is speedy marriage, secretly achieved,
 Then publicly declared. Beseech you, dear,
 Grant me this confidence; do my will in this,
 Trusting the reasons why I overset
 All my own airy building raised so high
 Of bridal honors, marking when you step
 From off your maiden throne to come to me
 And bear the yoke of love. There is great need.
 I hastened home, carrying this prayer to you
 Within my heart. The bishop is my friend,
 Furthers our marriage, holds in enmity—
 Some whom we love not and who love not us.
 By this night's moon our priest will be despatched
 From Jaén. I shall march an escort strong
 To meet him. Ere a second sun from this
 Has risen—you consenting—we may wed.

FEDALMA.

None knowing that we wed?

DON SILVA.

Beforehand none
 Save Ifiez and Don Alvar. But the vows
 Once safely binding us, my household all
 Shall know you as their Duchess. No man then
 Can aim a blow at you but through my breast,

And what stains you must stain our ancient name ;
 If any hate you I will take his hate,
 And wear it as a glove upon my helm :
 Nay, God himself will never have the power
 To strike you solely and leave me unhurt,
 He having made us one. Now put the seal
 Of your dear lips on that.

FEDALMA.

A solemn kiss?—
 Such as I gave you when you came that day
 From Córdoba, when first we said we loved ?
 When you had left the ladies of the Court
 For thirst to see me ; and you told me so,
 And then I seemed to know why I had lived.
 I never knew before. A kiss like that ?

DON SILVA.

Yes, yes, you face divine ! When was our kiss
 Like any other ?

FEDALMA.

Nay, I cannot tell
 What other kisses are. But that one kiss
 Remains upon my lips. The angels, spirits,
 Creatures with finer sense, may see it there.
 And now another kiss that will not die,
 Saying, To-morrow I shall be your wife !

(They kiss, and pause a moment, looking earnestly in each other's eyes. Then FEDALMA, breaking away from DON SILVA, stands at a little distance from him with a look of roguish delight.)

Now I am glad I saw the town to-day
 Before I am a Duchess—glad I gave
 This poor Fedalma all her wish. For once,
 Long years ago, I cried when Inez said,
 "You are no more a little girl;" I grieved
 To part forever from that little girl
 And all her happy world so near the ground.
 It must be sad to outlive aught we love.
 So I shall grieve a little for these days
 Of poor unwed Fedalma. Oh, they are sweet,
 And none will come just like them. Perhaps the wind
 Wails so in winter for the summers dead,
 And all sad sounds are nature's funeral cries
 For what has been and is not. Are they, Silva ?

(She comes nearer to him again, and lays her hand on his arm, looking up at him with melancholy.)

DON SILVA.

Why, dearest, you began in merriment,
 And end as sadly as a widowed bird.
 Some touch mysterious has new-tuned your soul
 To melancholy sequence. You soared high
 In that wild flight of rapture when you danced,
 And now you droop. 'Tis arbitrary grief,
 Surfeit of happiness, that mourns for loss
 Of unwed love, which does but die like seed

For fuller harvest of our tenderness.
 We in our wedded life shall know no loss.
 We shall new-date our years. What went before
 Will be the time of promise, shadows, dreams;
 But this, full revelation of great love.
 For rivers blent take in a broader heaven,
 And we shall blend our souls. Away with grief!
 When this dear head shall wear the double crown
 Of wife and Duchess—spiritually crowned
 With sworn espousal before God and man—
 Visibly crowned with jewels that bespeak
 The chosen sharer of my heritage—
 My love will gather perfectness, as thoughts
 That nourish us to magnanimity
 Grow perfect with more perfect utterance,
 Gathering full-shapen strength. And then these gems,

(DON SILVA draws FEDALMA towards the jewel-casket on the table, and opens it.)

Helping the utterance of my soul's full choice,
 Will be the words made richer by just use,
 And have new meaning in their lustrousness.
 You know these jewels; they are precious signs
 Of long-transmitted honour, heightened still
 By worthy wearing; and I give them you—
 Ask you to take them—place our house's trust
 In her sure keeping whom my heart has found
 Worthiest, most beauteous. These rubies—see—
 Were falsely placed if not upon your brow.

(FEDALMA, while DON SILVA holds open the casket, bends over it, looking at the jewels with delight.)

FEDALMA.

Ah, I remember them. In childish days
 I felt as if they were alive and breathed.
 I used to sit with awe and look at them.
 And now they will be mine! I'll put them on.
 Help me, my lord, and you shall see me now
 Somewhat as I shall look at Court with you,
 That we may know if I shall bear them well.
 I have a fear sometimes: I think your love
 Has never paused within your eyes to look,
 And only passes through them into mine.
 But when the Court is looking, and the queen,
 Your eyes will follow theirs. Oh, if you saw
 That I was other than you wished—'twere death!

DON SILVA (taking up a jewel and placing it against her ear.)

Nay, let us try. Take out your ear-ring, sweet.
 This ruby glows with longing for your ear.

FEDALMA (taking out her ear-rings, and then lifting up the other jewels, one by one).

Pray, fasten in the rubies.

(DON SILVA begins to put in the ear-ring.)

I was right!

These gems have life in them: their colors speak,
 Say what words fail of. So do many things—

The scent of jasmine, and the fountain's plash,
 The moving shadows on the far-off hills,
 The slanting moonlight, and our clasping hands.
 O Silva, there's an ocean round our words
 That overflows and drowns them. Do you know
 Sometimes when we sit silent, and the air
 Breathes gently on us from the orange-trees,
 It seems that with the whisper of a word
 Our souls must shrink, get poorer, more apart.
 Is it not true?

DON SILVA.

Yes, dearest, it is true.
 Speech is but broken light upon the depth
 Of the unspoken: even your loved words
 Float in the larger meaning of your voice
 As something dimmer.

(He is still trying in vain to fasten the second ear-ring, while she has stooped again over the casket.)

FEDALMA *(raising her head)*.

Ah! your lordly hands
 Will never fix that jewel. Let me try.
 Women's small finger-tips have eyes.

DON SILVA.

No, no!

I like the task, only you must be still.

(She stands perfectly still, clasping her hands together while he fastens the second ear-ring. Suddenly a clanking noise is heard without.)

FEDALMA *(starting with an expression of pain)*.

What is that sound?—that jarring cruel sound?
 'Tis there—outside.

(She tries to start away towards the window, but DON SILVA detains her.)

DON SILVA.

O heed it not, it comes
 From workmen in the outer gallery.

FEDALMA.

It is the sound of fetters; sound of work
 Is not so dismal. Hark, they pass along!
 I know it is those Gypsy prisoners.
 I saw them, heard their chains. O horrible,
 To be in chains! Why, I with all my bliss
 Have longed sometimes to fly and be at large;
 Have felt imprisoned in my luxury
 With servants for my jailers. O my lord,
 Do you not wish the world were different?

DON SILVA.

It will be different when this war has ceased.
 You, wedding me, will make it different,
 Making one life more perfect.

FEDALMA.

That is true!

And I shall beg much kindness at your hands

For those who are less happy than ourselves.—
(Brightening) Oh I shall rule you! ask for many things
 Before the world, which you will not deny
 For very pride, lest men should say, "The Duke
 Holds lightly by his Duchess; he repents
 His humble choice."

(She breaks away from him and returns to the jewels, taking up a necklace, and clasping it on her neck, while he takes a circlet of diamonds and rubies and raises it towards her head as he speaks.)

DON SILVA.

Doubtless, I shall persist
 In loving you, to disappoint the world;
 Out of pure obstinacy feel myself
 Happiest of men. Now, take the coronet.
(He places the circlet on her head.)
 The diamonds want more light. See, from this lamp
 I can set tapers burning.

FEDALMA.

Tell me, now,
 When all these cruel wars are at an end,
 And when we go to Court at Córdoba,
 Or Seville, or Toledo—wait awhile,
 I must be farther off for you to see—
(She retreats to a distance from him, and then advances slowly.)

Now think (I would the tapers gave more light!)
 If when you show me at the tournaments
 Among the other ladies, they will say,
 "Duke Silva is well matched. His bride was nought,
 Was some poor foster-child, no man knows what;
 Yet is her carriage noble, all her robes
 Are worn with grace: she might have been well born."
 Will they say so? Think now we are at Court,
 And all eyes bent on me.

DON SILVA.

Fear not, my Duchess!
 Some knight who loves may say his lady-love
 Is fairer, being fairest. None can say
 Don Silva's bride might better fit her rank.
 You will make rank seem natural as kind,
 As eagle's plumage or the lion's might.
 A crown upon your brow would seem God-made.

FEDALMA.

Then I am glad! I shall try on to-night
 The other jewels—have the tapers lit,
 And see the diamonds sparkle.

(She goes to the casket again.)

Here is gold—

A necklace of pure gold—most finely wrought.

(She takes out a large gold necklace and holds it up before her, then turns to

DON SILVA.)

But this is one that you have worn, my lord?

DON SILVA.

No, love, I never wore it. Lay it down.

(He puts the necklace gently out of her hand, then joins both her hands and holds them up between his own.)

You must not look at jewels any more,
But look at me.

FEDALMA *(looking up at him)*.

O you dear heaven!

I should see nought if you were gone. 'Tis true
My mind is too much given to gauds—to things
That fetter thought within this narrow space
That comes of fear.

DON SILVA.

What fear?

FEDALMA.

Fear of myself.

For when I walk upon the battlements
And see the river travelling toward the plain,
The mountains screening all the world beyond,
A longing comes that haunts me in my dreams—
Dreams where I seem to spring from off the walls,
And fly far, far away, until at last
I find myself alone among the rocks,
Remember then that I have left you—try
To fly back to you—and my wings are gone!

DON SILVA.

A wicked dream! If ever I left you,
Even in dreams, it was some demon dragged me,
And with fierce struggles I awaked myself.

FEDALMA.

It is a hateful dream, and when it comes—
I mean, when in my waking hours there comes
That longing to be free, I am afraid:
I run down to my chamber, plait my hair,
Weave colors in it, lay out all my gauds,
And in my mind make new ones prettier.
You see I have two minds, and both are foolish.
Sometimes a torrent rushing through my soul
Escapes in wild strange wishes; presently,
It dwindles to a little babbling rill
And plays among the pebbles and the flowers.
Iñez will have it I lack broidery,
Says nought else gives content to noble maids.
But I have never broidered—never will.
No, when I am a Duchess and a wife
I shall ride forth—may I not?—by your side

DON SILVA.

Yes, you shall ride upon a palfrey, black
To match Bavieca. Not Queen Isabel
Will be a sight more gladdening to men's eyes
Than my dark queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Ah, but you,

You are my king, and I shall tremble still
 With some great fear that throbs within my love.
 Does your love fear?

DON SILVA.

Ah, yes! all preciousness

To mortal hearts is guarded by a fear.
 All love fears loss, and most that loss supreme,
 Its own perfection—seeing, feeling change
 From high to lower, dearer to less dear.
 Can love be careless? If we lost our love
 What should we find?—with this sweet Past torn off,
 Our lives deep scarred just where their beauty lay?
 The best we found thenceforth were still a worse:
 The only better is a Past that lives
 On through an added Present, stretching still
 In hope unchecked by shaming memories
 To life's last breath. And so I tremble too
 Before my queen Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

That is just.

'Twere hard of Love to make us women fear
 And leave you bold. Yet Love is not quite even.
 For feeble creatures, little birds and fawns,
 Are shaken more by fear, while large strong things
 Can bear it stoutly. So we women still
 Are not well dealt with. Yet I'd choose to be
 Fedalma loving Silva. You, my lord,
 Hold the worse share, since you must love poor me.
 But is it what we love, or how we love,
 That makes true good?

DON SILVA.

O subtlety! for me

'Tis what I love determines how I love.
 The goddess with pure rites reveals herself
 And makes pure worship.

FEDALMA.

Do you worship me?

DON SILVA.

Ay, with that best of worship which adores
 Goodness adorable.

FEDALMA (*archly*).

Goodness obedient,
 Doing your will, devoutest worshipper?

DON SILVA.

Yes—listening to this prayer. This very night
 I shall go forth. And you will rise with day
 And wait for me?

FEDALMA.

Yes.

DON SILVA.

I shall surely come.

And then we shall be married. Now I go
To audience fixed in Abderahman's tower.
Farewell, love!

(They embrace.)

FEDALMA.

Some chill dread possesses me!

DON SILVA.

Oh, confidence has oft been evil angury,
So dread may hold a promise. Sweet, farewell!
I shall send tendance as I pass, to bear
This casket to your chamber.—One more kiss.

(Exit.)

FEDALMA *(when DON SILVA is gone, returning to the casket, and looking dreamily at the jewels).*

Yes, now that good seems less impossible!
Now it seems true that I shall be his wife,
Be ever by his side, and make a part
In all his purposes. . . .
These rubies greet me Duchess. How they glow!
Their prisoned souls are throbbing like my own.
Perchance they loved once, were ambitious, proud;
Or do they only dream of wider life,
Ache from intenseness, yearn to burst the wall
Compact of crystal splendor, and to flood
Some wider space with glory? Poor, poor gems!
We must be patient in our prison-house,
And find our space in loving. Pray you, love me.
Let us be glad together. And you, gold—

(She takes up the gold necklace.)

You wondrous necklace—will you love me, too,
And be my amulet to keep me safe
From eyes that hurt?

(She spreads out the necklace, meaning to clasp it on her neck. Then pauses, startled, holding it before her.)

Why, it is magical!

He says he never wore it—yet these lines—
Nay, if he had, I should remember well
'Twas he, no other. And these twisted lines—
They seem to speak to me as writing would,
To bring a message from the dead, dead past.
What is their secret? Are they characters?
I never learned them; yet they stir some sense
That once I dreamed—I have forgotten what.
Or was it life? Perhaps I lived before
In some strange world where first my soul was shaped,
And all this passionate love, and joy, and pain,
That come, I know not whence, and sway my deeds,
Are old imperious memories, blind yet strong,
That this world stirs within me; as this chain

Stirs some strange certainty of visions gone,
And all my mind is as an eye that stares
Into the darkness painfully.

(While FEDALMA has been looking at the necklace, JUAN has entered, and finding himself unobserved by her, says at last),

Señora!

FEDALMA starts, and gathering the necklace together, turns round—
Oh, Juan, it is you!

JUAN.

I met the Duke—

Had waited long without, no matter why—
And when he ordered one to wait on you
And carry forth a burden you would give,
I prayed for leave to be the servitor.
Don Silva owes me twenty granted wishes
That I have never tendered, lacking aught
That I could wish for and a Duke could grant;
But this one wish to serve you, weighs as much
As twenty other longings.

FEDALMA (*smiling*).

That sounds well.

You turn your speeches prettily as songs.
But I will not forget the many days
You have neglected me. Your pupil learns
But little from you now. Her studies flag.
The Duke says, "That is idle Juan's way:
Poets must rove—are honey-sucking birds
And know not constancy." Said he quite true?

JUAN.

O lady, constancy has kind and rank.
One man's is lordly, plump, and bravely clad,
Holds its head high, and tells the world its name:
Another man's is beggared, must go bare,
And shiver through the world, the jest of all,
But that it puts the motley on, and plays
Itself the jester. But I see you hold
The Gypsy's necklace: it is quaintly wrought.

FEDALMA.

The Gypsy's? Do you know its history?

JUAN.

No farther back than when I saw it taken
From off its wearer's neck—the Gypsy chief's.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

What! he who paused, at tolling of the bell,
Before me in the Plaza?

JUAN.

Yes, I saw

His look fixed on you.

FEDALMA.

Know you aught of him?

JUAN.

Something and nothing—as I know the sky,

Or some great story of the olden time
That hides a secret. I have oft talked with him.
He seems to say much, yet is but a wizard
Who draws down rain by sprinkling; throws me out
Some pregnant text that urges comment; casts
A sharp-hooked question, baited with such skill
It needs must catch the answer.

FEDALMA.

It is hard
That such a man should be a prisoner—
Be chained to work.

JUAN.

Oh, he is dangerous!
Granáda with this Zarca for a king
Might still maim Christendom. He is of those
Who steal the keys from snoring Destiny
And make the prophets lie. A Gypsy, too,
Suckled by hunted beasts, whose mother-milk
Has filled his veins with hate.

FEDALMA.

I thought his eyes
Spoke not of hatred—seemed to say he bore
The pain of those who never could be saved.
What if the Gypsies are but savage beasts
And must be hunted?—let them be set free,
Have benefit of chase, or stand at bay
And fight for life and offspring. Prisoners!
Oh! they have made their fires beside the streams,
Their walls have been the rocks, the pillared pines,
Their roof the living sky that breathes with light:
They may well hate a cage, like strong-winged birds,
Like me, who have no wings, but only wishes.
I will beseech the Duke to set them free.

JUAN.

Pardon me, lady, if I seem to warn,
Or try to play the sage. What if the Duke
Loved not to hear of Gypsies? if their name
Were poisoned for him once, being used amiss?
I speak not as of fact. Our nimble souls
Can spin an insubstantial universe
Suiting our mood, and call it possible,
Sooner than see one grain with eye exact
And give strict record of it. Yet by chance
Our fancies may be truth and make us seers.
'Tis a rare teeming world, so harvest-full,
Even guessing ignorance may pluck some fruit.
Note what I say no farther than will stead
The siege you lay. I would not seem to tell
Aught that the Duke may think and yet withhold:
It were a trespass in me.

FEDALMA.

Fear not, Juan.
Your words bring daylight with them when you speak.
I understand your care. But I am brave—

Oh! and so cunning!—always I prevail.
 Now, honored Troubadour, if you will be
 Your pupil's servant, bear this casket hence.
 Nay, not the necklace: it is hard to place.
 Pray go before me; Iñez will be there.

(Exit JUAN with the casket.)

FEDALMA *(looking again at the necklace).*

It is *his* past clings to you, not my own.
 If we have each our angels, good and bad, !
 Fates, separate from ourselves, who act for us
 When we are blind, or sleep, then this man's fate,
 Hovering about the thing he used to wear,
 Has laid its grasp on mine appealingly.
 Dangerous, is he?—well, a Spanish knight
 Would have his enemy strong—defy, not bind him.
 I can dare all things when my soul is moved
 By something hidden that possesses me.
 If Silva said this man must keep his chains
 I should find ways to free him—disobey
 And free him as I did the birds. But no!
 As soon as we are wed, I'll put my prayer,
 And he will not deny me: he is good.
 Oh, I shall have much power as well as joy!
 Duchess Fedalma may do what she will.

A Street by the Castle. JUAN leans against a parapet, in moonlight, and touches his lute half unconsciously. PEPITA stands on tiptoe watching him, and then advances till her shadow falls in front of him. He looks towards her. A piece of white drapery thrown over her head catches the moonlight.

JUAN.

Ha! my Pepita! see how thin and long
 Your shadow is. 'Tis so your ghost will be,
 When you are dead.

PEPITA *(crossing herself).*

Dead!—O the blessed saints!
 You would be glad, then, if Pepita died?

JUAN.

Glad! why? Dead maidens are not merry. Ghosts
 Are doleful company. I like you living.

PEPITA.

I think you like me not. I wish you did.
 Sometimes you sing to me and make me dance,
 Another time you take no heed of me,
 Not though I kiss my hand to you and smile.
 But Andrès would be glad if I kissed *him*.

JUAN.

My poor Pepita, I am old.

PEPITA.

No, no.

You have no wrinkles.

JUAN.

Yes, I have—within;

The wrinkles are within, my little bird.
 Why, I have lived through twice a thousand years,
 And kept the company of men whose bones
 Crumbled before the blessed Virgin lived.

PEPITA (*crossing herself*).

Nay, God defend us, that is wicked talk!
 You say it but to scorn me. (*With a sob*) I will go.

JUAN.

Stay, little pigeon. I am not unkind.
 Come, sit upon the wall. Nay, never cry.
 Give me your cheek to kiss. There, cry no more!

(PEPITA, *sitting on the low parapet, puts up her cheek to JUAN, who kisses it, putting his hand under her chin. She takes his hand and kisses it*).

PEPITA.

I like to kiss your hand. It is so good—
 So smooth and soft.

JUAN.

Well, well, I'll sing to you.

PEPITA.

A pretty song, loving and merry?

JUAN.

Yes.

(JUAN *sings*.)

*Memory,
 Tell to me
 What is fair,
 Past compare,
 In the land of Tubal?*

*Is it Spring's
 Lovely things,
 Blossoms white,
 Rosy dight?
 Then it is Pepita.*

*Summer's crest
 Red-gold tressed,
 Corn-flowers peeping under?—*

*Idle noons,
 Lingering moons,
 Sudden cloud,
 Lightning's shroud,
 Sudden rain,
 Quick again
 Smiles where late was thunder?—
 Are all these
 Made to please?
 So too is Pepita.*

*Autumn's prime,
 Apple-time,
 Smooth cheek round,
 Heart all sound?*

*Is it this
You would kiss?
Then it is Pepita.*

*You can bring
No sweet thing,
But my mind
Still shall find
It is my Pepita.*

*Memory
Says to me
It is she—
She is fair
Past compare
In the land of Tubal.*

PEPITA (*seizing JUAN's hand again*).

Oh, then, you do love me?

JUAN.
Yes, in the song.

PEPITA (*sadly*).
Not out of it?—not love me out of it?

JUAN.
Only a little out of it, my bird.
When I was singing I was Andrès, say,
Or one who loves you better still than he.

PEPITA.
Not yourself?

JUAN.
No!

PEPITA (*throwing his hand down pettishly*).
Then take it back again!
I will not have it!

JUAN.
Listen, little one.
Juan is not a living man by himself:
His life is breathed in him by other men,
And they speak out of him. He is their voice.
Juan's own life he gave once quite away.
Pepita's lover sang that song—not Juan.
We old, old poets, if we kept our hearts,
Should hardly know them from another man's.
They shrink to make room for the many more
We keep within us. There, now—one more kiss,
And then go home again.

PEPITA (*a little frightened, after letting JUAN kiss her*).
You are not wicked?

JUAN.
Ask your confessor—tell him what I said.

(PEPITA goes, while JUAN thrums his lute again, and sings.)
*Came a pretty maid
By the moon's pure light,*

Loved me well, she said,
 Eyes with tears all bright,
 A pretty maid!
 But too late she strayed,
 Moonlight pure was there;
 She was nought but shade
 Hiding the more fair,
 The heavenly maid!

A vaulted room all stone. The light shed from a high lamp. Wooden chairs, a desk, book-shelves. The PRIOR, in white frock, a black rosary with a crucifix of ebony and ivory at his side, is walking up and down, holding a written paper in his hands, which are clasped behind him.

What if this witness lies? he says he heard her
 Counting her blasphemies on a rosary,
 And in a bold discourse with Salomo,
 Say that the Host was nought but ill-mixed flour,
 That it was mean to pray—she never prayed.
 I know the man who wrote this for a cur,
 Who follows Don Diego, sees life's good
 In scraps my nephew flings to him. What then?
 Particular lies may speak a general truth.
 I guess him false, but know her heretic—
 Know her for Satan's instrument, bedecked
 With heathenish charms, luring the souls of men
 To damning trust in good unsanctified.
 Let her be prisoned—questioned—she will give
 Witness against herself, that were this false . . .

(He looks at the paper again and reads, then again thrusts it behind him).

The matter and the color are not false:
 The form concerns the witness not the judge;
 For proof is gathered by the sifting mind,
 Not given in crude and formal circumstance.
 Suspicion is a heaven-sent lamp, and I—
 I, watchman of the Holy Office, bear
 That lamp in trust. I will keep faithful watch.
 The Holy Inquisition's discipline
 Is mercy, saving her, if penitent—
 God grant it!—else—root up the poison-plant,
 Though 'twere a lily with a golden heart!
 This spotless maiden with her pagan soul
 Is the arch-enemy's trap: he turns his back
 On all the prostitutes, and watches her
 To see her poison men with false belief
 In rebel virtues. She has poisoned Silva;
 His shifting mind, dangerous in fitfulness,
 Strong in the contradiction of itself,
 Carries his young ambitions wearily,
 As holy vows regretted. Once he seemed
 The fresh-oped flower of Christian knighthood, born
 For feats of holy daring; and I said:
 "That half of life which I, as monk, renounce,
 Shall be fulfilled in him: Silva will be
 That saintly noble, that wise warrior,
 That blameless excellence in worldly gifts
 I would have been, had I not asked to live

The higher life of man impersonal
 Who reigns o'er all things by refusing all."
 What is his promise now? Apostasy
 From every high intent:—languid, nay, gone,
 The prompt devoutness of a generous heart,
 The strong obedience of a reverent will,
 That breathes the Church's air and sees her light,
 He peers and strains with feeble questioning,
 Or else he jests. He thinks I know it not—
 I who have read the history of his lapse,
 As clear as it is writ in the angel's book.
 He will defy me—flings great words at me—
 Me who have governed all our house's acts,
 Since I, a stripling, ruled his stripling father.
 This maiden is the cause, and if they wed,
 The Holy War may count a captain lost.
 For better he were dead than keep his place,
 And fill it infamously: in God's war
 Slackness is infamy. Shall I stand by
 And let the tempter win? defraud Christ's cause,
 And blot his banner?—all for scruples weak
 Of pity towards their young and frolicsome blood;
 Or nice discrimination of the tool
 By which my hand shall work a sacred rescue?
 The fence of rules is for the purblind crowd;
 They walk by averaged precepts: sovereign men,
 Seeing by God's light, see the general
 By seeing all the special—own no rule
 But their full vision of the moment's worth.
 'Tis so God governs, using wicked men—
 Nay, scheming fiends, to work his purposes.
 Evil that good may come? Measure the good
 Before you say what's evil. Perjury?
 I scorn the perjurer, but I will use him
 To serve the holy truth. There is no lie
 Save in his soul, and let his soul be judged.
 I know the truth, and act upon the truth.

O God, thou knowest that my will is pure.
 Thy servant owns nought for himself, his wealth
 Is but obedience. And I have sinned
 In keeping small respects of human love—
 Calling it mercy. Mercy? Where evil is
 True mercy holds a sword. Mercy would save.
 Save whom? Save serpents, locusts, wolves?
 Or out of pity let the idiots gorge
 Within a famished town? Or save the gains
 Of men who trade in poison lest they starve?
 Save all things mean and foul that clog the earth
 Stifling the better? Save the fools who cling
 For refuge round their hideous idol's limbs,
 So leave the idol grinning unconsumed,
 And save the fools to breed idolaters?
 O mercy worthy of the licking hound
 That knows no future but its feeding time!
 Mercy has eyes that pierce the ages—sees
 From heights divine of the eternal purpose

Far-scattered consequence in its vast sum;
 Chooses to save, but with illumined vision
 Sees that to save is greatly to destroy.
 'Tis so the Holy Inquisition sees: its wrath
 Is fed from the strong heart of wisest love.
 For love must needs make hatred. He who loves
 God and his law must hate the foes of God.
 And I have sinned in being merciful:
 Being slack in hate, I have been slack in love.

(He takes the crucifix and holds it up before him.)

Thou shuddering, bleeding, thirsting, dying God,
 Thou Man of Sorrows, scourged and bruised and torn,
 Suffering to save—wilt thou not judge the world?
 This arm which held the children, this pale hand
 That gently touched the eyelids of the blind,
 And opened passive to the cruel nail,
 Shall one day stretch to leftward of thy throne,
 Charged with the power that makes the lightning strong,
 And hurl thy foes to everlasting hell.
 And thou, Immaculate Mother, Virgin mild,
 Thou sevenfold-pierced, thou pitying, pleading Queen,
 Shalt see and smile, while the black filthy souls
 Sink with foul weight to their eternal place,
 Purging the Holy Light. Yea, I have sinned
 And called it mercy. But I shrink no more.
 To-morrow morn this temptress shall be safe
 Under the Holy Inquisition's key.
 He thinks to wed her, and defy me then,
 She being shielded by our house's name.
 But he shall never wed her. I have said.

The time is come. *Exurge, Domine,*
Judica causam tuam. Let thy foes
 Be driven as the smoke before the wind,
 And melt like wax upon the furnace lip!

A large chamber richly furnished opening on a terrace-garden, the trees visible through the window in faint moonlight. Flowers hanging about the window, lit up by the tapers. The casket of jewels open on a table. The gold necklace lying near. FEDALMA, splendidly dressed and adorned with pearls and rubies, is walking up and down.

So soft a night was never made for sleep,
 But for the waking of the finer sense
 To every murmuring and gentle sound,
 To subtlest odors, pulses, visitings
 That touch our frames with wings too delicate
 To be discerned amid the blare of day.

(She pauses near the window to gather some jasmine: then walks again.)

Surely these flowers keep happy watch—their breath
 Is their fond memory of the loving light.
 I often rue the hours I lose in sleep:
 It is a bliss too brief, only to see
 This glorious world, to hear the voice of love,
 To feel the touch, the breath of tenderness,
 And then to rest as from a spectacle.
 I need the curtained stillness of the night

To live through all my happy hours again
 With more selection—cull them quite away
 From blemished moments. Then in loneliness
 The face that bent before me in the day
 Rises in its own light, more vivid seems
 Painted upon the dark, and ceaseless glows
 With sweet solemnity of gazing love,
 Till like the heavenly blue it seems to grow
 Nearer, more kindred, and more cherishing,
 Mingling with all my being. Then the words,
 The tender low-toned words come back again,
 With repetition welcome as the chime
 Of softly hurrying brooks—"My only love—
 My love while life shall last—my own Fedalma!"
 Oh it is mine—the joy that once has been!
 Poor eager hope is but a stammerer,
 Must listen dumbly to great memory,
 Who makes our bliss the sweeter by her telling.

(She pauses a moment musingly.)

But that dumb hope is still a sleeping guard
 Whose quiet rhythmic breath saves me from dread
 In this fair paradise. For if the earth
 Broke off with flower-fringed edge, visibly sheer,
 Leaving no footing for my forward step
 But empty blackness . . .

Nay, there is no fear—

They will renew themselves, day and my joy,
 And all that past which is securely mine,
 Will be the hidden root that nourishes
 Our still unfolding, ever-ripening love!

(While she is uttering the last words, a little bird falls softly on the floor behind her; she hears the light sound of its fall, and turns round.)

Did something enter? . . .

Yes, this little bird . . .

(She lifts it.)

Dead and yet warm; 'twas seeking sanctuary,
 And died, perhaps of fright, at the altar foot.
 Stay, there is something tied beneath the wing!
 A strip of linen, streaked with blood—what blood?
 The streaks are written words—are sent to me—
 O God, are sent to me! Dear child, Fedalma,
 Be brave, give no alarm—your Father comes!

(She lets the bird fall again.)

My Father . . . comes . . . my Father . . .

(She turns in quivering expectation towards the window. There is perfect stillness a few moments until ZAROA appears at the window. He enters quickly and noiselessly; then stands still at his full height, and at a distance from FEDALMA.)

FEDALMA *(in a low, distinct tone of terror).*

It is he!

I said his fate had laid its hold on mine.

ZAROA *(advancing a step or two).*

You know, then, who I am?

FEDALMA.

The prisoner—

He whom I saw in fetters—and this necklace . . .

ZARCA.

Was played with by your fingers when it hung
About my neck, full fifteen years ago.

FEDALMA (*looking at the necklace and handling it, then speaking, as if unconsciously*).

Full fifteen years ago!

ZARCA.

The very day

I lost you, when you wore a tiny gown
Of scarlet cloth with golden broidery:
'Twas clasped in front by coins—two golden coins.
The one upon the left was split in two
Across the king's head, right from brow to nape,
A dent i' the middle nicking in the cheek.
You see I know the little gown by heart.

FEDALMA (*growing paler and more tremulous*).

Yes. It is true—I have the gown—the clasps—
The braid—sore tarnished:—it is long ago!

ZARCA.

But yesterday to me; for till to-day
I saw you always as that little child.
And when they took my necklace from me, still
Your fingers played about it on my neck,
And still those buds of fingers on your feet
Caught in its meshes as you seemed to climb
Up to my shoulder. You were not stolen all.
You had a double life fed from my heart. . . .

(FEDALMA, *letting fall the necklace, makes an impulsive movement towards him with outstretched hands.*)

The Gypsy father loves his children well.

FEDALMA (*shrinking, trembling, and letting fall her hands*).

How came it that you sought me—no—I mean,
How came it that you knew me—that you lost me?

ZARCA (*standing perfectly still*).

Poor child! I see—your father and his rags
Are welcome as the piercing wintry wind
Within this silken chamber. It is well.
I would not have a child who stooped to feign,
And aped a sudden love. Better, true hate.

FEDALMA (*raising her eyes towards him, with a flash of admiration, and looking at him fixedly*).

Father, how was it that we lost each other?

ZARCA.

I lost you as a man may lose a gem
Wherein he has compressed his total wealth,
Or the right hand whose cunning makes him great;
I lost you by a trivial accident.
Marauding Spaniards, sweeping like a storm
Over a spot within the Moorish bounds
Near where our camp lay, doubtless snatched you up,

When Zind, your nurse, as she confessed, was urged
 By burning thirst to wander toward the stream,
 And leave you on the sand some paces off
 Playing with pebbles, while she dog-like lapped.
 'Twas so I lost you—never saw you more
 Until to-day I saw you dancing! Saw
 The daughter of the Zincalo make sport
 For those who spit upon her people's name.

FEDALMA (*vehemently*).

It was not sport. What if the world looked on?—
 I danced for joy—for love of all the world.
 But when you looked at me my joy was stabbed—
 Stabbed with your pain. I wondered . . . now I know . . .
 It was my father's pain.

(*She pauses a moment with eyes bent downward, during which ZARCA examines her face. Then she says quickly,*)

How were you sure

At once I was your child?

ZARCA.

I had witness strong

As any Cadi needs, before I saw you!
 I fitted all my memories with the chat
 Of one named Juan—one whose rapid talk
 Showers like the blossoms from a light-twigg'd shrub,
 If you but cough beside it. I learned all
 The story of your Spanish nurture—all
 The promise of your fortune. When at last
 I fronted you, my little maid full-grown,
 Belief was turned to vision: then I saw
 That she whom Spaniards called the bright Fedalma—
 The little red-frocked foundling three years old—
 Grown to such perfectness the Spanish Duke
 Had wooed her for his Duchess—was the child,
 Sole offspring of my flesh, that Lambra bore
 One hour before the Christian, hunting us,
 Hurried her on to death. Therefore I sought—
 Therefore I come to claim you—claim my child,
 Not from the Spaniard, not from him who robbed,
 But from herself.

(FEDALMA has gradually approached close to ZARCA, and with a low sob sinks on her knees before him. He stoops to kiss her brow, and lays his hands on her head.)

ZARCA (*with solemn tenderness*).

Then my child owns her father?

FEDALMA.

Father! yes.

I will eat dust before I will deny
 The flesh I spring from.

ZARCA.

There my daughter spoke.

Away then with these rubies!

(*He seizes the circlet of rubies and flings it on the ground. FEDALMA, starting from the ground with strong emotion, shrinks backward.*)

Such a crown

Is infamy around a Zíncala's brow.
It is her people's blood, decking her shame.

FEDALMA (*after a moment, slowly and distinctly, as if accepting a doom*).

Then . . . I was born . . . a Zíncala?

ZARCA.

Of a blood
Unmixed as virgin wine-juice.

FEDALMA.

Of a race
More outcast and despised than Moor or Jew?

ZARCA.

Yes: wanderers whom no God took knowledge of
To give them laws, to fight for them, or blight
Another race to make them ampler room;
Who have no Whence or Whither in their souls,
No dimmest lore of glorious ancestors
To make a common hearth for piety.

FEDALMA.

A race that lives on prey as foxes do
With stealthy, petty rapine: so despised,
It is not persecuted, only spurned,
Crushed underfoot, warred on by chance like rats,
Or swarming flies, or reptiles of the sea
Dragged in the net unsought, and flung far off
To perish as they may?

ZARCA.

You paint us well.

So abject are the men whose blood we share:
Untutored, unbefriended, unendowed;
No favorites of heaven or of men.
Therefore I cling to them! Therefore no lure
Shall draw me to disown them, or forsake
The meagre wandering herd that lows for help
And needs me for its guide, to seek my pasture
Among the well-fed beeves that graze at will.
Because our race has no great memories,
I will so live, it shall remember me
For deeds of such divine beneficence
As rivers have, that teach men what is good
By blessing them. I have been schooled—have caught
Lore from the Hebrew, deftness from the Moor—
Know the rich heritage, the milder life,
Of nations fathered by a mighty Past;
But were our race accursed (as they who make
Good luck a god count all unlucky men)
I would espouse their curse sooner than take
My gifts from brethren naked of all good,
And lend them to the rich for usury.

(FEDALMA again advances, and putting forth her right hand grasps ZARCA's left. He places his other hand on her shoulder. They stand so, looking at each other.)

ZARCA.

And you, my child? are you of other mind,
Choosing forgetfulness, hating the truth
That says you are akin to needy men?—
Wishing your father were some Christian Duke,
Who could hang Gypsies when their task was done,
While you, his daughter, were not bound to care?

FEDALMA (*in a troubled, eager voice*).

No, I should always care—I cared for you—
For all, before I dreamed . . .

ZARCA.

Before you dreamed
That you were born a Zincala—your flesh
Stamped with your people's faith.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

The Gypsies' faith?
Men say they have none.

ZARCA.

Oh, it is a faith
Taught by no priest, but by their beating hearts:
Faith to each other: the fidelity
Of fellow-wanderers in a desert place
Who share the same dire thirst, and therefore share
The scanty water: the fidelity
Of men whose pulses leap with kindred fire,
Who in the flash of eyes, the clasp of hands,
The speech that even in lying tells the truth
Of heritage inevitable as birth,
Nay, in the silent bodily presence feel
The mystic stirring of a common life
Which makes the many one: fidelity
To the consecrating oath our sponsor Fate
Made through our infant breath when we were born
The fellow-heirs of that small island, Life,
Where we must dig and sow and reap with brothers.
Fear thou that oath, my daughter—nay, not fear,
But love it; for the sanctity of oaths
Lies not in lightning that avenges them,
But in the injury wrought by broken bonds
And in the garnered good of human trust.
And you have sworn—even with your infant breath
You too were pledged. . . .

FEDALMA (*letting go ZARCA's hand, and sinking backward on her knees, with bent head, as if before some impending, crushing weight*).

To what? what have I sworn?

ZARCA.

To take the heirship of the Gypsy's child:
The child of him who, being chief, will be
The savior of his tribe, or if he fail
Will choose to fall rather than basely win
The prize of renegades. Nay, will not choose—
Is there a choice for strong souls to be weak?
For men erect to crawl like hissing snakes?

I choose not—I *am* Zarca. Let him choose
 Who halts and wavers, having appetite
 To feed on garbage. You, my child—are you
 Halting and wavering?

FEDALMA (*raising her head*).

Say what is my task.

ZARCA.

To be the angel of a homeless tribe:
 To help me bless a race taught by no prophet
 And make their name, now but a badge of scorn,
 A glorious banner floating in their midst,
 Stirring the air they breathe with impulses
 Of generous pride, exalting fellowship
 Until it soars to magnanimity.
 I'll guide my brethren forth to their new land,
 Where they shall plant and sow and reap their own,
 Serving each other's needs, and so be spurred
 To skill in all the arts that succor life;
 Where we may kindle our first altar-fire
 From settled hearths, and call our Holy Place
 The hearth that binds us in one family.
 That land awaits them: they await their chief—
 Me who am prisoned. All depends on you.

FEDALMA (*rising to her full height, and looking solemnly at ZARCA*).

Father, your child is ready! She will not
 Forsake her kindred: she will brave all scorn
 Sooner than scorn herself. Let Spaniards all,
 Christians, Jews, Moors, shoot out the lip and say,
 "Lo, the first hero in a tribe of thieves."
 Is it not written so of them? They, too,
 Were slaves, lost, wandering, sunk beneath a curse,
 Till Moses, Christ, and Mahomet were born,
 Till beings lonely in their greatness lived,
 And lived to save the people. Father, listen.
 The Duke to-morrow weds me secretly:
 But straight he will present me at his wife
 To all his household, cavaliers and dames
 And noble pages. Then I will declare
 Before them all, "I am his daughter, his,
 The Gypsy's, owner of this Golden badge."
 Then I shall win your freedom; then the Duke—
 Why, he will be your son!—will send you forth
 With aid and honors. Then, before all eyes
 I'll clasp this badge on you, and lift my brow
 For you to kiss it, saying by that sign,
 "I glory in my father." This, to-morrow.

ZARCA.

A woman's dream—who thinks by smiling well
 To ripen figs in frost. What! marry first,
 And then proclaim your birth? Enslave yourself
 To use your freedom? Share another's name,
 Then treat it as you will? How will that tune
 Ring in your bridegroom's ears—that sudden song
 Of triumph in your Gypsy father?

FEDALMA (*discouraged*).

Nay,

I meant not so. We marry hastily—
 Yet there is time—there will be:—in less space
 Than he can take to look at me, I'll speak
 And tell him all. Oh, I am not afraid!
 His love for me is stronger than all hate;
 Nay, stronger than my love, which cannot sway
 Demons that haunt me—tempt me to rebel.
 Were he Fedalma and I Silva, he
 Could love confession, prayers, and tonsured monks
 If my soul craved them. He will never hate
 The race that bore him what he loves the most.
 I shall but do more strongly what I will,
 Having his will to help me. And to-morrow,
 Father, as surely as this heart shall beat,
 You—every Gypsy chained, shall be set free.

ZARCA (*coming nearer to her, and laying his hand on her shoulder*).

Too late, too poor a service that, my child!
 Not so the woman who would save her tribe
 Must help its heroes—not by wordy breath,
 By easy prayers strong in a lover's ear,
 By showering wreaths and sweets and wafted kisses,
 And then, when all the smiling work is done,
 Turning to rest upon her down again,
 And whisper languid pity for her race
 Upon the bosom of her alien spouse.
 Not to such petty morsels as can fall
 'Twixt stitch and stitch of silken broidery,
 Such miracles of mitred saints who pause
 Beneath their gilded canopy to heal
 A man sun-stricken: not to such trim merit
 As soils its dainty shoes for charity
 And simpers meekly at the pious stain,
 But never trod with naked, bleeding feet
 Where no man praised it, and where no Church blessed:
 Not to such almsdeeds fit for holidays
 Were you, my daughter, consecrated—bound
 By laws that, breaking, you will dip your bread
 In murdered brother's blood and call it sweet—
 When you were born beneath the dark man's tent,
 And lifted up in sight of all your tribe,
 Who greeted you with shouts of loyal joy,
 Sole offspring of the chief in whom they trust
 As in the oft-tried, never-failing flint
 They strike their fire from. Other work is yours.

FEDALMA.

What work?—what is it that you ask of me?

ZARCA.

A work as pregnant as the act of men
 Who set their ships aflame and spring to land,
 A fatal deed . . .

FEDALMA.

Stay! never utter it!

If it can part my lot from his whose love

Has chosen me. Talk not of oaths, of birth,
 Of men as numerous as the dim white stars—
 As cold and distant, too, for my heart's pulse.
 No ills on earth, though you should count them up
 With grains to make a mountain, can outweigh
 For me, his ill who is my supreme love.
 All sorrows else are but imagined flames,
 Making me shudder at an unfelt smart;
 But his imagined sorrow is a fire
 That scorches me.

ZARCA.

I know, I know it well—
 The first young, passionate wail of spirits called
 To some great destiny. In vain, my daughter!
 Lay the young eagle in what nest you will,
 The cry and swoop of eagles overhead
 Vibrate prophetic in its kindred frame,
 And make it spread its wings and poise itself
 For the eagle's flight. Hear what you have to do.

(FEDALMA stands half averted, as if she dreaded the effect of his looks and words.)

My comrades even now file off their chains
 In a low turret by the battlements,
 Where we were locked with slight and sleepy guard—
 We who had files in our shaggy hair,
 And possible ropes that waited but our will
 In half our garments. Oh, the Moorish blood
 Runs thick and warm to us, though thinned by chrism.
 I found a friend among our jailers—one
 Who loves the Gypsy as the Moor's ally.
 I know the secrets of this fortress. Listen.
 Hard by yon terrace is a narrow stair,
 Cut in the living rock, and at one point
 In its slow straggling course it branches off
 Towards a low wooden door, that art has bossed
 To such unevenness it seems one piece
 With the rough-hewn rock. Open that door, it leads
 Through a broad passage burrowed under ground
 A good half-mile out to the open plain:
 Made for escape, in dire extremity
 From siege or burning, of the house's wealth
 In women or in gold. To find that door
 Needs one who knows the number of the steps
 Just to the turning-point; to open it,
 Needs one who knows the secret of the bolt.
 You have that secret: you will ope that door,
 And fly with us.

FEDALMA (*receding a little, and gathering herself up in an attitude of resolve opposite to ZARCA*).

No, I will never fly!
 Never forsake that chief half of my soul
 Where lies my love. I swear to set you free.
 Ask for no more; it is not possible.
 Father, my soul is not too base to ring
 At touch of your great thoughts; nay, in my blood

There streams the sense unspeakable of kind,
 As leopard feels at ease with leopard. But—
 Look at these hands! You say when they were little
 They played about the gold upon your neck.
 I do believe it, for their tiny pulse
 Made record of it in the inmost coil
 Of growing memory. But see them now!
 Oh, they have made fresh record; twined themselves
 With other throbbing hands whose pulses feed
 Not memories only but a blended life—
 Life that will bleed to death if it be severed.
 Have pity on me, father! Wait the morning;
 Say you will wait the morning. I will win
 Your freedom openly: you shall go forth
 With aid and honors. Silva will deny
 Nought to my asking . . .

ZARCA (*with contemptuous decision*).

Till you ask him aught
 Wherein he is powerless. Soldiers even now
 Murmur against him that he risks the town,
 And forfeits all the prizes of a foray
 To get his bridal pleasure with a bride
 Too low for him. They'll murmur more and louder
 If captives of our pith and sinew, fit
 For all the work the Spaniard hates, are freed—
 Now, too, when Spanish hands are scanty. What,
 Turn Gypsies loose instead of hanging them!
 'Tis flat against the edict. Nay, perchance
 Murmurs aloud may turn to silent threats
 Of some well-sharpened dagger; for your Duke
 Has to his heir a pious cousin, who deems
 The Cross were better served if he were Duke.
 Such good you'll work your lover by your prayers.

FEDALMA.

Then, I will free you now! You shall be safe,
 Nor he be blamed, save for his love to me.
 I will declare what I have done: the deed
 May put our marriage off . . .

ZARCA.

Ay, till the time
 When you shall be a queen in Africa,
 And he be prince enough to sue for you.
 You cannot free us and come back to him.

FEDALMA.

And why?

ZARCA.

I would compel you to go forth.

FEDALMA.

You tell me that?

ZARCA.

Yes, for I'd have you choose;
 Though, being of the blood you are—my blood—
 You have no right to choose.

FEDALMA.

I only owe
A daughter's debt; I was not born a slave.

ZARCA.

No, not a slave; but you were born to reign.
'Tis a compulsion of a higher sort,
Whose fetters are the net invisible
That hold all life together. Royal deeds
May make long destinies for multitudes,
And you are called to do them. You belong
Not to the petty round of circumstance
That makes a woman's lot, but to your tribe,
Who trust in me and in my blood with trust
That men call blind; but it is only blind
As unyeaned reason is, that grows and stirs
Within the womb of superstition.

FEDALMA.

No!

I belong to him who loves me—whom I love—
Who chose me—whom I chose—to whom I pledged
A woman's truth. And that is nature too,
Issuing a fresher law than laws of birth.

ZARCA.

Unmake yourself, then, from a Zincala—
Unmake yourself from being child of mine!
Take holy water, cross your dark skin white;
Round your proud eyes to foolish kitten looks;
Walk mincingly, and smirk, and twitch your robe:
Unmake yourself—doff all the eagle plumes
And be a parrot, chained to a ring that slips
Upon a Spaniard's thumb, at will of his
That you should prattle o'er his words again!
Get a small heart that flutters at the smiles
Of that plump penitent, that greedy saint
Who breaks all treaties in the name of God,
Saves souls by confiscation, sends to heaven
The altar-fumes of burning heretics,
And chaffers with the Levite for the gold;
Holds Gypsies beasts unfit for sacrifice,
So sweeps them out like worms alive or dead.
Go, trail your gold and velvet in her court!—
A conscious Zincala, smile at your rare luck,
While half your brethren . . .

FEDALMA.

I am not so vile!

It is not to such mockeries that I cling,
Not to the flaring tow of gala-lights;
It is to him—my love—the face of day.

ZARCA.

What, will you part him from the air he breathes,
Never inhale with him although you kiss him?
Will you adopt a soul without its thoughts,
Or grasp a life apart from flesh and blood?

Till then you cannot wed a Spanish Duke
 And not wed shame at mention of your race,
 And not wed hardness to their miseries—
 Nay, not wed murder. Would you save my life
 Yet stab my purpose? maim my every limb,
 Put out my eyes, and turn me loose to feed?
 Is that salvation? rather drink my blood.
 That child of mine who weds my enemy—
 Adores a God who took no heed of Gypsies—
 Forsakes her people, leaves their poverty
 To join the luckier crowd that mocks their woes—
 That child of mine is doubly murderess,
 Murdering her father's hope, her people's trust.
 Such draughts are mingled in your cup of love!
 And when you have become a thing so poor,
 Your life is all a fashion without law
 Save frail conjecture of a changing wish,
 Your worshipped sun, your smiling face of day,
 Will turn to cloudiness, and you will shiver
 In your thin finery of vain desire.
 Men call his passion madness; and he, too,
 May learn to think it madness: 'tis a thought
 Of ducal sanity.

FEDALMA.

No, he is true!

And if I part from him I part from joy.
 Oh, it was morning with us, I seemed young.
 But now I know I am an aged sorrow—
 My people's sorrow. Father, since I am yours—
 Since I must walk an unslain sacrifice,
 Carrying the knife within me, quivering—
 Put cords upon me, drag me to the doom
 My birth has laid upon me. See, I kneel:
 I cannot will to go.

ZARCA.

Will then to stay!

Say you will take your better, painted such
 By blind desire, and choose the hideous worse
 For thousands who were happier but for you.
 My thirty followers are assembled now
 Without this terrace: I your father wait
 That you may lead us forth to liberty—
 Restore me to my tribe—five hundred men
 Whom I alone can save, alone can rule,
 And plant them as a mighty nation's seed.
 Why, vagabonds who clustered round one man,
 Their voice of God, their prophet and their king,
 Twice grew to empire on the teeming shores
 Of Africa, and sent new royalties
 To feed afresh the Arab sway in Spain.
 My vagabonds are a seed more generous,
 Quick as the serpent, loving as the hound,
 And beautiful as disinherited gods.
 They have a promised land beyond the sea:
 There I may lead them, raise my standard, call
 The wandering Zíncali to that new home,
 And make a nation—bring light, order, law,

Instead of chaos. You, my only heir,
 Are called to reign for me when I am gone.
 Now choose your deed: to save or to destroy.
 You, a born Zíncala, you, fortunate
 Above your fellows—you who hold a curse
 Or blessing in the hollow of your hand—
 Say you will loose that hand from fellowship,
 Let go the rescuing rope, hurl all the tribes,
 Children and countless beings yet to come,
 Down from the upward path of light and joy,
 Back to the dark and marshy wilderness
 Where life is nought but blind tenacity
 Of that which is. Say you will curse your race!

FEDALMA (*rising and stretching out her arms in deprecation*).

No, no—I will not say it—I will go!
 Father, I choose! I will not take a heaven
 Haunted by shrieks of far-off misery.
 This deed and I have ripened with the hours:
 It is a part of me—a wakened thought
 That, rising like a giant, masters me,
 And grows into a doom. O mother life,
 That seemed to nourish me so tenderly,
 Even in the womb you vowed me to the fire,
 Hung on my soul the burden of men's hopes,
 And pledged me to redeem!—I'll pay the debt.
 You gave me strength that I should pour it all
 Into this anguish. I can never shrink
 Back into bliss—my heart has grown too big
 With things that might be. Father, I will go.
 I will strip off these gems. Some happier bride
 Shall wear them, since Fedalma would be dowered
 With nought but curses, dowered with misery
 Of men—of women, who have hearts to bleed
 As hers is bleeding.

(*She sinks on a seat, and begins to take off her jewels.*)

Now, good gems, we part.

Speak of me always tenderly to Silva.

(*She pauses, turning to ZARCA.*)

O father, will the women of our tribe
 Suffer as I do, in the years to come
 When you have made them great in Africa?
 Redeemed from ignorant ills only to feel
 A conscious woe? Then—is it worth the pains?
 Were it not better when we reach that shore
 To raise a funeral-pile and perish all,
 So closing up a myriad avenues
 To misery yet unwrought? My soul is faint—
 Will these sharp pangs buy any certain good?

ZARCA.

Nay, never falter: no great deed is done
 By falterers who ask for certainty.
 No good is certain, but the steadfast mind,
 The undivided will to seek the good:
 'Tis that compels the elements, and wrings

A human music from the indifferent air.
 The greatest gift the hero leaves his race
 Is to have been a hero. Say we fail!—
 We feed the high tradition of the world,
 And leave our spirit in our children's breasts.

FEDALMA (*unclasping her jewelled belt, and throwing it down*).

Yes, say that we shall fail! I will not count
 On aught but being faithful. I will take
 This yearning self of mine and strangle it.
 I will not be half-hearted: never yet
 Fedalma did aught with a wavering soul.
 Die, my young joy—die, all my hungry hopes—
 The milk you cry for from the breast of life
 Is thick with curses. Oh, all fatness here
 Snatches its meat from leanness—feeds on graves.
 I will seek nothing but to shun base joy.
 The saints were cowards who stood by to see
 Christ crucified: they should have flung themselves
 Upon the Roman spears, and died in vain—
 The grandest death, to die in vain—for love
 Greater than sways the forces of the world!
 That death shall be my bridegroom. I will wed
 The curse that blights my people. Father, come!

ZARCA.

No curse has fallen on us till we cease
 To help each other. You, if you are false
 To that first fellowship, lay on the curse.
 But write now to the Spaniard; briefly say
 That I, your father, came; that you obeyed
 The fate which made you Zíncala, as his fate
 Made him a Spanish duke and Christian knight.
 He must not think . . .

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will write, but he—
 Oh, he would know it—he would never think
 The chain that dragged me from him could be aught
 But scorching iron entering in my soul.

(*She writes.*)

*Silva, sole love—he came—my father came.
 I am the daughter of the Gypsy chief
 Who means to be the savior of our tribe.
 He calls on me to live for his great end.
 To live? nay, die for it. Fedalma dies
 In leaving Silva: all that lives henceforth
 Is the poor Zíncala.*

(*She rises.*)

Father, now I go
 To wed my people's lot.

ZARCA.

To wed a crown.
 Our people's lowly lot we will make royal—
 Give it a country, homes, and monuments
 Held sacred through the lofty memories
 That we shall leave behind us. Come, my Queen!

FEDALMA.

Stay, my betrothal ring!—one kiss—farewell!
 O love, you were my crown. No other crown
 Is aught but thorns on my poor woman's brow.

BOOK II.

SILVA was marching homeward while the moon
 Still shed mild brightness like the far-off hope
 Of those pale virgin lives that wait and pray.
 The stars thin-scattered made the heavens large,
 Bending in slow procession; in the east
 Emergent from the dark waves of the hills,
 Seeming a little sister of the moon,
 Glowed Venus all unquenched. Silva, in haste,
 Exultant and yet anxious, urged his troop
 To quick and quicker march: he had delight
 In forward stretching shadows, in the gleams
 That travelled on the armor of the van,
 And in the many-hoofed sound: in all that told
 Of hurrying movement to o'ertake his thought
 Already in Bedmár, close to Fedalma,
 Leading her forth a wedded bride, fast vowed,
 Defying Father Isidor. His glance
 Took in with much content the priest who rode
 Firm in his saddle, stalwart and broad-backed,
 Crisp-curled, and comfortably secular,
 Right in the front of him. But by degrees
 Stealthily faint, disturbing with slow loss
 That showed not yet full promise of a gain,
 The light was changing, and the watch intense
 Of moon and stars seemed weary, shivering:
 The sharp white brightness passed from off the rocks
 Carrying the shadows: beauteous Night lay dead
 Under the pall of twilight, and the love-star
 Sickened and shrank. The troop was winding now
 Upward to where a pass between the peaks
 Seemed like an opened gate—to Silva seemed
 An outer-gate of heaven, for through that pass
 They entered his own valley, near Bedmár.
 Sudden within the pass a horseman rose,
 One instant dark upon the banner pale
 Of rock-cut sky, the next in motion swift
 With hat and plume high shaken—ominous.
 Silva had dreamed his future, and the dream
 Held not this messenger. A minute more—
 It was his friend Don Alvar whom he saw
 Reining his horse up, face to face with him,
 Sad as the twilight, all his clothes ill-girt—
 As if he had been roused to see one die,
 And brought the news to him whom death had robbed.
 Silva believed he saw the worst—the town
 Stormed by the infidel—or, could it be

Fedalma dragged?—no, there was not yet time.
But with a marble face, he only said,
“What evil, Alvar?”

“What this paper speaks.”

It was Fedalma's letter folded close
And mute as yet for Silva. But his friend
Keeping it still sharp-pinned against his breast,
“It will smite hard, my lord : a private grief.
I would not have you pause to read it here.
Let us ride on—we use the moments best,
Reaching the town with speed. The smaller ill
Is that our Gypsy prisoners have escaped.”
“No more. Give me the paper—nay, I know—
’Twill make no difference. Bid them march on faster.”
Silva pushed forward—held the paper crushed
Close in his right. “They have imprisoned her,”
He said to Alvar in low, hard-cut tones,
Like a dream-speech of slumbering revenge.
“No—when they came to fetch her she was gone.”
Swift as the right touch on a spring, that word
Made Silva read the letter. She was gone!
But not into locked darkness—only gone
Into free air—where he might find her yet.
The bitter loss had triumph in it—what!
They would have seized her with their holy claws
The Prior's sweet morsel of despotic hate
Was snatched from off his lips. This misery
Had yet a taste of joy.

But she was gone!
The sun had risen, and in the castle walls
The light grew strong and stronger. Silva walked
Through the long corridor where dimness yet
Cherished a lingering, flickering, dying hope:
Fedalma still was there—he could not see
The vacant place that once her presence filled.
Can we believe that the dear dead are gone?
Love in sad weeds forgets the funeral day,
Opens the chamber door and almost smiles—
Then sees the sunbeams pierce athwart the bed
Where the pale face is not. So Silva's joy,
Like the sweet habit of caressing hands
That seek the memory of another hand,
Still lived on fitfully in spite of words,
And, numbing thought with vague illusion, dulled
The slow and steadfast beat of certainty.
But in the rooms inexorable light
Streamed through the open window where she fled,
Streamed on the belt and coronet thrown down—
Mute witnesses—sought out the typic ring
That sparkled on the crimson, solitary,
Wounding him like a word. O hateful light!
It filled the chambers with her absence, glared
On all the motionless things her hand had touched,
Motionless all—save where old Iñez lay
Sunk on the floor holding her rosary,
Making its shadow tremble with her fear.
And Silva passed her by because she grieved:

It was the lute, the gems, the pictured heads,
 He longed to crush, because they made no sign
 But of insistence that she was not there,
 She who had filled his sight and hidden them.
 He went forth on the terrace tow'rd the stairs,
 Saw the rained petals of the cistus flowers
 Crushed by large feet; but on one shady spot
 Far down the steps, where dampness made a home,
 He saw a footprint delicate-slippered, small,
 So dear to him, he searched for sister-prints,
 Searched in the rock-hewn passage with a lamp
 For other trace of her, and found a glove;
 But not Fedalma's. It was Juan's glove,
 Tasselled, perfumed, embroidered with his name,
 A gift of dames. Then Juan, too, was gone?
 Full-mouthed conjecture, hurrying through the town,
 Had spread the tale already: it was he
 That helped the Gypsies' flight. He talked and sang
 Of nothing but the Gypsies and Fedalma.
 He drew the threads together, wove the plan;
 Had lingered out by moonlight, had been seen
 Strolling, as was his wont, within the walls,
 Humming his ditties. So Don Alvar told,
 Conveying outside rumor. But the Duke,
 Making of haughtiness a visor closed,
 Would show no agitated front in quest
 Of small disclosures. What her writing bore
 Had been enough. He knew that she was gone,
 Knew why.

"The Duke," some said, "will send a force,
 Retake the prisoners, and bring back his bride."
 But others, winking, "Nay, her wedding dress
 Would be the *san venito*. 'Tis a fight
 Between the Duke and Prior. Wise bets will choose
 The churchman: he's the iron, and the Duke . . ."
 "Is a fine piece of pottery," said mine host,
 Softening the sarcasm with a bland regret.

There was the thread that in the new-made knot
 Of obstinate circumstance seemed hardest drawn,
 Vexed most the sense of Silva, in these hours
 Of fresh and angry pain—there, in that fight
 Against a foe whose sword was magical,
 His shield invisible terrors—against a foe
 Who stood as if upon the smoking mount
 Ordaining plagues. All else, Fedalma's flight,
 The father's claim, her Gypsy birth disclosed,
 Were momentary crosses, hinderances
 A Spanish noble might despise. This Chief
 Might still be treated with, would not refuse
 A proffered ransom, which would better serve
 Gypsy prosperity, give him more power
 Over his tribe, than any fatherhood:
 Nay, all the father in him must plead loud
 For marriage of his daughter where she loved—
 Her love being placed so high and lustrously.
 The Gypsy chieftain had foreseen a price

That would be paid him for his daughter's dower—
 Might soon give signs. Oh, all his purpose lay
 Face upward. Silva here felt strong, and smiled.
 What could a Spanish noble not command?
 He only helped the Queen, because he chose;
 Could war on Spaniards, and could spare the Moor;
 Buy justice, or defeat it—if he would:
 Was loyal, not from weakness, but from strength
 Of high resolve to use his birthright well.
 For nobles too are gods, like Emperors,
 Accept perforce their own divinity,
 And wonder at the virtue of their touch,
 Till obstinate resistance shakes their creed,
 Shattering that self whose wholeness is not rounded
 Save in the plastic souls of other men.
 Don Silva had been suckled in that creed
 (A high-taught speculative noble else),
 Held it absurd as foolish argument
 If any failed in deference, was too proud
 Not to be courteous to so poor a knave
 As one who knew not necessary truths
 Of birth and dues of rank; but cross his will,
 The miracle-working will, his rage leaped out
 As by a right divine to rage more fatal
 Than a mere mortal man's. And now that will
 Had met a stronger adversary—strong
 As awful ghosts are whom we cannot touch,
 While they clutch *us*, subtly as poisoned air,
 In deep-laid fibres of inherited fear
 That lie below all courage.

Silva said,

"She is not lost to me, might still be mine
 But for the Inquisition—the dire hand
 That waits to clutch her with a hideous grasp
 Not passionate, human, living, but a grasp
 As in the death-throe when the human soul
 Departs and leaves force unrelenting, locked,
 Not to be loosened save by slow decay
 That frets the universe. Father Isidor
 Has willed it so: his phial dropped the oil
 To catch the air-borne motes of idle slander;
 He fed the fascinated gaze that clung
 Round all her movements, frank as growths of spring,
 With the new hateful interest of suspicion.
 What barrier is this Gypsy? a mere gate
 I'll find the key for. The one barrier,
 The tightening cord that winds about my limbs,
 Is this kind uncle, this imperious saint,
 He who will save me, guard me from myself.
 And he can work his will: I have no help
 Save reptile secrecy, and no revenge
 Save that I *will* do what he schemes to hinder.
 Ay, secrecy and disobedience—these
 No tyranny can master. Disobey!
 You may divide the universe with God,
 Keeping your will unbent, and hold a world
 Where He is not supreme. The Prior shall know it!

His will shall breed resistance: he shall do
The thing he would not, further what he hates
By hardening my resolve."

But 'neath this speech—
Defiant, hectoring, the more passionate voice
Of many-blended consciousness—there breathed
Murmurs of doubt, the weakness of a self
That is not one; denies and yet believes;
Protests with passion, "This is natural"—
Yet owns the other still were truer, better,
Could nature follow it: a self disturbed
By budding growths of reason premature
That breed disease. With all his outflung rage
Silva half shrank before the steadfast man
Whose life was one compacted whole, a realm
Where the rule changed not, and the law was strong.
Then that reluctant homage stirred new hate,
And gave rebellion an intenser will.

But soon this inward strife the slow-paced hours
Slackened; and the soul sank with hunger-pangs,
Hunger of love. Debate was swept right down
By certainty of loss intolerable.
A little loss! only a dark-tressed maid
Who had no heritage save her beauteous being!
But in the candor of her virgin eyes
Saying, I love; and in the mystic charm
Of her dear presence, Silva found a heaven
Where faith and hope were drowned as stars in day.
Fedalma there, each momentary Now
Seemed a whole blest existence, a full cup
That, flowing over, asked no pouring hand
From past to future. All the world was hers.
Splendor was but the herald trumpet-note
Of her imperial coming: penury
Vanished before her as before a gem,
The pledge of treasures. Fedalma there,
He thought all loveliness was lovelier,
She crowning it: all goodness credible,
Because of that great trust her goodness bred.
For the strong current of the passionate love
Which urged his life tow'rd hers, like urgent floods
That hurry through the various-mingled earth,
Carried within its stream all qualities
Of what it penetrated, and made love
Only another name, as Silva was,
For the whole man that breathed within his frame.
And she was gone. Well, goddesses will go;
But for a noble there were mortals left
Shaped just like goddesses—O hateful sweet!
O impudent pleasure that should dare to front
With vulgar visage memories divine!
The noble's birthright of miraculous will
Turning *I would to must be*, spurning all
Offered as substitute for what it chose,
Tightened and fixed in strain irrevocable
The passionate selection of that love

Which came not first but as all-conquering last.
 Great Love has many attributes, and shrines
 For varied worship, but his force divine
 Shows most its many-named fulness in the man
 Whose nature multitudinously mixed—
 Each ardent impulse grappling with a thought—
 Resists all easy gladness, all content
 Save mystic rapture, where the questioning soul
 Flooded with consciousness of good that is
 Finds life one bounteous answer. So it was
 In Silva's nature, Love had mastery there,
 Not as a holiday ruler, but as one
 Who quells a tumult in a day of dread,
 A welcomed despot.

O all comforters,
 All soothing things that bring mild ecstasy,
 Came with her coming, in her presence lived.
 Spring afternoons, when delicate shadows fall
 Pencilled upon the grass; high summer morns
 When white light rains upon the quiet sea
 And corn-fields flush with ripeness; odors soft—
 Dumb vagrant bliss that seems to seek a home
 And find it deep within, 'mid stirrings vague
 Of far-off moments when our life was fresh;
 All sweetly-tempered music, gentle change
 Of sound, form, color, as on wide lagoons
 At sunset when from black far-floating prows
 Comes a clear wafted song; all exquisite joy
 Of a subdued desire, like some strong stream
 Made placid in the fulness of a lake—
 All came with her sweet presence, for she brought
 The love supreme which gathers to its realm
 All powers of loving. Subtle nature's hand
 Waked with a touch the far-linked harmonies
 In her own manifold work. Fedalma there,
 Fastidiousness became the prelude fine
 For full contentment; and young melancholy,
 Lost for its origin, seemed but the pain
 Of waiting for that perfect happiness.
 The happiness was gone!

He sate alone,
 Hating companionship that was not hers;
 Felt bruised with hopeless longing; drank, as wine,
 Illusions of what had been, would have been;
 Weary with anger and a strained resolve,
 Sought passive happiness in waking dreams.
 It has been so with rulers, emperors,
 Nay, sages who held secrets of great Time,
 Sharing his hoary and beneficent life—
 Men who sate throned among the multitudes—
 They have sore sickened at the loss of one.
 Silva sat lonely in her chamber, leaned
 Where she had leaned, to feel the evening breath
 Shed from the orange trees; when suddenly
 His grief was echoed in a sad young voice
 Far and yet near, brought by aerial wings.

*The world is great : the birds all fly from me,
The stars are golden fruit upon a tree
All out of reach : my little sister went,
And I am lonely.*

*The world is great : I tried to mount the hill
Above the pines, where the light lies so still,
But it rose higher : little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.*

*The world is great : the wind comes rushing by,
I wonder where it comes from ; sea-birds cry
And hurt my heart : my little sister went,
And I am lonely.*

*The world is great : the people laugh and talk,
And make loud holiday : how fast they walk !
I'm lame, they push me : little Lisa went,
And I am lonely.*

'Twas Pablo, like the wounded spirit of song
Pouring melodious pain to cheat the hour
For idle soldiers in the castle court.
Dreamily Silva heard and hardly felt
The song was outward, rather felt it part
Of his own aching, like the lingering day,
Or slow and mournful cadence of the bell.
But when the voice had ceased he longed for it,
And fretted at the pause, as memory frets
When words that made its body fall away
And leave it yearning dumbly. Silva then
Bethought him whence the voice came, framed perforce
Some outward image of a life not his
That made a sorrowful centre to the world :
A boy lame, melancholy-eyed, who bore
A viol—yes, that very child he saw
This morning eating roots by the gateway—saw
As one fresh-ruined sees and spells a name
And knows not what he does, yet finds it writ
Full in the inner record. Hark, again !
The voice and viol. Silva called his thought
To guide his ear and track the travelling sound

*O bird that used to press
Thy head against my cheek
With touch that seemed to speak
And ask a tender "yes"—
Ay de mi, my bird !*

*O tender downy breast
And warmly beating heart,
That beating seemed a part
Of me who gave it rest—
Ay de mi, my bird !*

The western court ! The singer might be seen
From the upper gallery : quick the Duke was there
Looking upon the court as on a stage.
Men eased of armor, stretched upon the ground,

Gambling by snatches; shepherds from the hills
 Who brought their bleating friends for slaughter; grooms
 Shouldering loose harness; leather-aproned smiths,
 Traders with wares, green-suited serving-men,
 Made a round audience; and in their midst
 Stood little Pablo, pouring forth his song,
 Just as the Duke had pictured. But the song
 Was strangely companied by Roldan's play
 With the swift gleaming balls, and now was crushed
 By peals of laughter at grave Annibal,
 Who carrying stick and purse o'erturned the pence,
 Making mistake by rule. Silva had thought
 To melt hard bitter grief by fellowship
 With the world-sorrow trembling in his ear
 In Pablo's voice; had meant to give command
 For the boy's presence; but this company,
 This mountebank and monkey, must be—stay!
 Not be excepted—must be ordered too
 Into his private presence; they had brought
 Suggestion of a ready shapen tool
 To cut a path between his helpless wish
 And what it imaged. A ready shapen tool!
 A spy, an envoy whom he might despatch
 In unsuspected secrecy, to find
 The Gypsies' refuge so that none beside
 Might learn it. And this juggler could be bribed,
 Would have no fear of Moors—for who would kill
 Dancers and monkeys?—could pretend a journey
 Back to his home, leaving his boy the while
 To please the Duke with song. Without such chance—
 An envoy cheap and secret as a mole
 Who could go scatheless, come back for his pay
 And vanish straight, tied by no neighborhood—
 Without such chance as this poor juggler brought,
 Finding Fedalma was betraying her.

Short interval betwixt the thought and deed.
 Roldan was called to private audience
 With Annibal and Pablo. All the world
 (By which I mean the score or two who heard)
 Shrugged high their shoulders, and supposed the Duke
 Would fain beguile the evening and replace
 His lacking happiness, as was the right
 Of nobles, who could pay for any cure,
 And wore nought broken, save a broken limb.
 In truth, at first, the Duke bade Pablo sing,
 But, while he sang, called Roldan wide apart,
 And told him of a mission secret, brief—
 A quest which well performed might earn much gold,
 But, if betrayed, another sort of pay.
 Roldan was ready; "wished above all for gold
 And never wished to speak; had worked enough
 At wagging his old tongue and chiming jokes;
 Thought it was others' turn to play the fool.
 Give him but pence enough, no rabbit, sirs,
 Would eat and stare and be more dumb than he.
 Give him his orders."

They were given straight;
 Gold for the journey, and to buy a mule
 Outside the gates through which he was to pass
 Afoot and carelessly. The boy would stay
 Within the castle, at the Duke's command,
 And must have nought but ignorance to betray
 For threats or coaxing. Once the quest performed,
 The news delivered with some pledge of truth
 Safe to the Duke, the juggler should go forth,
 A fortune in his girdle, take his boy
 And settle firm as any planted tree
 In fair Valencia, never more to roam.
 "Good! good! most worthy of a great hidalgo!
 And Roldan was the man! But Annibal—
 A monkey like no other, though morose
 In private character, yet full of tricks—
 'Twere hard to carry him, yet harder still
 To leave the boy and him in company
 And free to slip away. The boy was wild
 And shy as mountain kid; once hid himself
 And tried to run away; and Annibal,
 Who always took the lad's side (he was small,
 And they were nearer of a size, and, sirs,
 Your monkey has a spite against us men
 For being bigger)—Annibal went too.
 Would hardly know himself, were he to lose
 Both boy and monkey—and 'twas property,
 The trouble he had put in Annibal.
 He didn't choose another man should beat
 His boy and monkey. If they ran away
 Some man would snap them up, and square himself
 And say they were his goods—he'd taught them—no!
 He, Roldan, had no mind another man
 Should fatten by his monkey, and the boy
 Should not be kicked by any pair of sticks
 Calling himself a juggler." . . .

But the Duke,
 Tired of that hammering, signed that it should cease,
 Bade Roldan quit all fears—the boy and ape
 Should be safe lodged in Abderahman's tower,
 In keeping of the great physician there,
 The Duke's most special confidant and friend,
 One skilled in taming brutes, and always kind.
 The Duke himself this eve would see them lodged.
 Roldan must go—spend' no more words—but go.

The Astrologer's Study.

A room high up in Abderahman's tower,
 A window open to the still warm eve,
 And the bright disk of royal Jupiter.
 Lamps burning low make little atmospheres
 Of light amid the dimness; here and there
 Show books and phials, stones and instruments.
 In carved dark-oaken chair, unpillowed, sleeps
 Right in the rays of Jupiter a small man,
 In skull-cap bordered close with crisp gray curls,

And loose black gown showing a neck and breast
 Protected by a dim-green amulet ;
 Pale-faced, with finest nostril wont to breathe
 Ethereal passion in a world of thought ;
 Eyebrows jet-black and firm, yet delicate ;
 Beard scant and grizzled ; mouth shut firm, with curves
 So subtly turned to meanings exquisite,
 You seem to read them as you read a word
 Full-vowelled, long-descended, pregnant—rich
 With legacies from long, laborious lives.
 Close by him, like a genius of sleep,
 Purrs the gray cat, bridling, with snowy breast.
 A loud knock. "Forward !" in clear vocal ring.
 Enter the Duke, Pablo, and Annibal,
 Exit the cat, retreating toward the dark.

DON SILVA.

You slept, Sephardo. I am come too soon.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, my lord, it was I who slept too long.
 I go to court among the stars to-night,
 So bathed my soul beforehand in deep sleep.
 But who are these ?

DON SILVA.

Small guests, for whom I ask
 Your hospitality. Their owner comes
 Some short time hence to claim them. I am pledged
 To keep them safely ; so I bring them you,
 Trusting your friendship for small animals.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, am not I too a small animal ?

DON SILVA.

I shall be much beholden to your love
 If you will be their guardian. I can trust
 No other man so well as you. The boy
 Will please you with his singing, touches too
 The viol wondrously.

SEPHARDO.

They are welcome both.

Their names are—— ?

DON SILVA.

Pablo, this—this Annibal,
 And yet, I hope, no warrior.

SEPHARDO.

We'll make peace.
 Come, Pablo, let us loosen our friend's chain.
 Deign you, my lord, to sit. Here Pablo, thou—
 Close to my chair. Now Annibal shall choose.

[The cautious monkey, in a Moorish dress,
 A tunic white, turban and scimitar,

Wears these stage garments, nay, his very flesh
 With silent protest; keeps a neutral air
 As aiming at a metaphysic state
 'Twixt "is" and "is not;" lets his chain be loosed
 By sage Sephardo's hands, sits still at first,
 Then trembles out of his neutrality,
 Looks up and leaps into Sephardo's lap,
 And chatters forth his agitated soul,
 Turning to peep at Pablo on the floor.]

SEPHARDO.

See, he declares we are at amity!

DON SILVA.

No brother sage had read your nature faster.

SEPHARDO.

Why, so he is a brother sage. Man thinks
 Brutes have no wisdom, since they know not his:
 Can we divine their world?—the hidden life
 That mirrors us as hideous shapeless power,
 Cruel supremacy of sharp-edged death,
 Or fate that leaves a bleeding mother robbed?
 Oh, they have long tradition and swift speech,
 Can tell with touches and sharp darting cries
 Whole histories of timid races taught
 To breathe in terror by red-handed man.

DON SILVA.

Ah, you denounce my sport with hawk and hound.
 I would not have the angel Gabriel
 As hard as you in noting down my sins.

SEPHARDO.

Nay, they are virtues for you warriors—
 Hawking and hunting! You are merciful
 When you leave killing men to kill the brutes.
 But, for the point of wisdom, I would choose
 To know the mind that stirs between the wings
 Of bees and building wasps, or fills the woods
 With myriad murmurs of responsive sense
 And true-aimed impulse, rather than to know
 The thoughts of warriors.

DON SILVA.

Yet they are warriors too—
 Your animals. Your judgment limps, Sephardo:
 Death is the king of this world; 'tis his park
 Where he breeds life to feed him. Cries of pain
 Are music for his banquet; and the masque—
 The last grand masque for his diversion, is
 The Holy Inquisition.

SEPHARDO.

Ay, anon

I may chime in with you. But not the less
 My judgment has firm feet. Though death were king,

And cruelty his right-hand minister,
 Pity insurgent in some human breasts
 Makes spiritual empire, reigns supreme
 As persecuted faith in faithful hearts.
 Your small physician, weighing ninety pounds,
 A petty morsel for a healthy shark,
 Will worship mercy throned within his soul
 Though all the luminous angels of the stars
 Burst into cruel chorus on his ear,
 Singing, "We know no mercy." He would cry
 "I know it" still, and soothe the frightened bird
 And feed the child a-hungred, walk abreast
 Of persecuted men, and keep most hate
 For rational torturers. There I stand firm.
 But you are bitter, and my speech rolls on
 Out of your note.

DON SILVA.

No, no, I follow you.
 I too have that within which I will worship
 In spite of . . . Yes, Sephardo, I am bitter.
 I need your counsel, foresight, all your aid.
 Lay these small guests to bed, then we will talk.

SEPHARDO.

See, they are sleeping now. The boy has made
 My leg his pillow. For my brother sage,
 He'll never heed us; he knit long ago
 A sound ape-system, wherein men are brutes
 Emitting doubtful noises. Pray, my lord,
 Unlade what burdens you: my ear and hand
 Are servants of a heart much bound to you.

DON SILVA.

Yes, yours is love that roots in gifts bestowed
 By you on others, and will thrive the more
 The more it gives. I have a double want:
 First a confessor—not a Catholic;
 A heart without a livery—naked manhood.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, I will be frank; there's no such thing
 As naked manhood. If the stars look down
 On any mortal of our shape, whose strength
 Is to judge all things without preference,
 He is a monster, not a faithful man.
 While my heart beats, it shall wear livery—
 My people's livery, whose yellow badge
 Marks them for Christian scorn. I will not say
 Man is first man to me, then Jew or Gentile:
 That suits the rich *marranos*; but to me
 My father is first father and then man.
 So much for frankness' sake. But let that pass.
 'Tis true at least, I am no Catholic
 But Salomo Sephardo, a born Jew,
 Willing to serve Don Silva.

DON SILVA.

Oft you sing
 Another strain, and melt distinctions down
 As no more real than the wall of dark
 Seen by small fishes' eyes, that pierce a span
 In the wide ocean. Now you league yourself
 To hem me, hold me prisoner in bonds
 Made, say you—how?—by God or Demiurge,
 By spirit or flesh—I care not! Love was made
 Stronger than bonds, and where they press must break them.
 I came to you that I might breathe at large,
 And now you stifle me with talk of birth,
 Of race and livery. Yet you knew Fedalma.
 She was your friend, Sephardo. And you know
 She is gone from me—know the hounds are loosed
 To dog me if I seek her.

SEPHARDO.

Yes, I know.
 Forgive me that I used untimely speech,
 Pressing a bruise. I loved her well, my lord:
 A woman mixed of such fine elements
 That were all virtue and religion dead
 She'd make them newly, being what she was.

DON SILVA.

Was? say not *was*, Sephardo! She still lives—
 Is, and is mine; and I will not renounce
 What heaven, nay, what she gave me. I will sin,
 If sin I must, to win my life again.
 The fault lie with those powers who have embroiled
 The world in hopeless conflict, where all truth
 Fights manacled with falsehood, and all good
 Makes but one palpitating life with ill.

(DON SILVA *pauses*. SEPHARDO *is silent*.)

Sephardo, speak! am I not justified?
 You taught my mind to use the wing that soars
 Above the petty fences of the herd:
 Now, when I need your doctrine, you are dumb.

SEPHARDO.

Patience! Hidalgos want interpreters
 Of untold dreams and riddles; they insist
 On dateless horoscopes, on formulas
 To raise a possible spirit, nowhere named.
 Science must be their wishing-cap; the stars
 Speak plainer for high largesse. No, my lord!
 I cannot counsel you to unknown deeds.
 This much I can divine: you wish to find
 Her whom you love—to make a secret search.

DON SILVA.

That is begun already: a messenger
 Unknown to all has been despatched this night,
 But forecast must be used, a plan devised,
 Ready for service when my scout returns,

Bringing the invisible thread to guide my steps
 Toward that lost self my life is aching with.
 Sephardo, I will go: and I must go
 Unseen by all save you; though, at our need,
 We may trust Alvar.

SEPHARDO.

A grave task, my lord.
 Have you a shapen purpose, or mere will
 That sees the end alone and not the means?
 Resolve will melt no rocks.

DON SILVA.

But it can scale them.
 This fortress has two private issues: one,
 Which served the Gypsies' flight, to me is closed:
 Our bands must watch the outlet, now betrayed
 To cunning enemies. Remains one other,
 Known to no man save me: a secret left
 As he'll loom in our house: a secret safe
 Even from him—from Father Isidor.
 'Tis he who forces me to use it—he:
 All's virtue that cheats bloodhounds. Hear, Sephardo.
 Given, my scout returns and brings me news
 I can straight act on, I shall want your aid.
 The issue lies below this tower, your fastness,
 Where, by my charter, you rule absolute.
 I shall feign illness; you with mystic air
 Must speak of treatment asking vigilance
 (Nay, I *am* ill—my life has half ebb'd out).
 I shall be whimsical, devolve command
 On Don Diego, speak of poisoning,
 Insist on being lodged within this tower,
 And rid myself of tendance save from you
 And perhaps from Alvar. So I shall escape
 Unseen by spies, shall win the days I need
 To ransom her and have her safe enshrined.
 No matter, were my flight disclosed at last;
 I shall come back as from a duel fought
 Which no man can undo. Now you know all.
 Say, can I count on you?

SEPHARDO.

For faithfulness
 In aught that I may promise, yes, my lord.
 But—for a pledge of faithfulness—this warning.
 I will betray nought for your personal harm:
 I love you. But note this—I am a Jew;
 And while the Christian persecutes my race,
 I'll turn at need even the Christian's trust
 Into a weapon and a shield for Jews.
 Shall Cruelty crowned—wielding the savage force
 Of multitudes, and calling savageness God
 Who gives it victory—upbraid deceit
 And ask for faithfulness? I love you well.
 You are my friend. But yet you are a Christian,
 Whose birth has bound you to the Catholic kings.

There may come moments when to share my joy
 Would make you traitor, when to share your grief
 Would make me other than a Jew . . .

DON SILVA.

What need
 To urge that now, Sephardo? I am one
 Of many Spanish nobles who detest
 The roaring bigotry of the herd, would fain
 Dash from the lips of king and queen the cup
 Filled with besotting venom, half infused
 By avarice and half by priests. And now—
 Now when the cruelty you flout me with
 Pierces me too in the apple of my eye,
 Now when my kinship scorches me like hate
 Flashed from a mother's eye, you choose this time
 To talk of birth as of inherited rage
 Deep-down, volcanic, fatal, bursting forth
 From under hard-taught reason? Wondrous friend!
 My uncle Isidor's echo, mocking me,
 From the opposing quarter of the heavens,
 With iteration of the thing I know,
 That I'm a Christian knight and Spanish duke!
 The consequence? Why, that I know. It lies
 In my own hands and not on raven tongues.
 The knight and noble shall not wear the chain
 Of false-linked thoughts in brains of other men.
 What question was there 'twixt us two, of aught
 That makes division? When I come to you
 I come for other doctrine than the Prior's.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you are o'erwrought by pain. My words,
 That carried innocent meaning, do but float
 Like little emptied cups upon the flood
 Your mind brings with it. I but answered you
 With regular proviso, such as stands
 In testaments and charters, to forefend
 A possible case which none deem likelihood;
 Just turned my sleeve, and pointed to the brand
 Of brotherhood that limits every pledge.
 Superfluous nicety—the student's trick,
 Who will not drink until he can define
 What water is and is not. But enough.
 My will to serve you now knows no division
 Save the alternate beat of love and fear.
 There's danger in this quest—name, honor, life—
 My lord, the stake is great, and are you sure . . .

DON SILVA.

No, I am sure of nought but this, Sephardo,
 That I will go. Prudence is but conceit
 Hoodwinked by ignorance. There's nought exists
 That is not dangerous and holds not death
 For souls or bodies. Prudence turns its heim
 To flee the storm and lands 'mid pestilence.
 Wisdom would end by throwing dice with folly

But for dire passion which alone makes choice.
 And I have chosen as the lion robbed
 Chooses to turn upon the ravisher.
 If love were slack, the Prior's imperious will
 Would move it to outmatch him. But, Sephardo.
 Were all else mute, all passive as sea-calms,
 My soul is one great hunger—I must see her.
 Now you are smiling. Oh, you merciful men
 Pick up coarse griefs and fling them in the face
 Of us whom life with long descent has trained
 To subtler pains, mocking your ready balms.
 You smile at my soul's hunger.

SEPHARDO.

Science smiles
 And sways our lips in spite of us, my lord,
 When thought weds fact—when maiden prophecy
 Waiting, believing, sees the bridal torch.
 I use not vulgar measures for your grief.
 My pity keeps no cruel feasts; but thought
 Has joys apart, even in blackest woe,
 And seizing some fine thread of verity
 Knows momentary godhead.

DON SILVA.

And your thought?

SEPHARDO.

Seized on the close agreement of your words
 With what is written in your horoscope.

DON SILVA.

Reach it me now.

SEPHARDO.

By your leave, Annibal.

(He places ANNIBAL on PABLO's lap and rises. The boy moves without waking, and his head falls on the opposite side. SEPHARDO fetches a cushion and lays PABLO's head gently down upon it, then goes to reach the parchment from a cabinet. ANNIBAL, having waked up in alarm, shuts his eyes quickly again and pretends to sleep.)

DON SILVA.

I wish, by new appliance of your skill,
 Reading afresh the records of the sky,
 You could detect more special augury.
 Such chance oft happens, for all characters
 Must shrink or widen, as our wine-skins do,
 For more or less that we can pour in them;
 And added years give ever a new key
 To fixed prediction.

SEPHARDO *(returning with the parchment and reseating himself.)*

True; our growing thought
 Makes growing revelation. But demand not
 Specific augury, as of sure success
 In meditated projects, or of ends
 To be foreknown by peeping in God's scroll.

I say—nay, Ptolemy said it, but wise books
 For half the truths they hold are honored tombs—
 Prediction is contingent, of effects
 Where causes and concomitants are mixed
 To seeming wealth of possibilities
 Beyond our reckoning. Who will pretend
 To tell the adventures of each single fish
 Within the Syrian Sea? Show me a fish,
 I'll weigh him, tell his kind, what he devoured,
 What would have devoured *him*—but for one Blas
 Who netted him instead; nay, could I tell
 That had Blas missed him, he would not have died.
 Of poisonous mud, and so made carrion,
 Swept off at last by some sea-scavenger?

DON SILVA.

Ay, now you talk of fishes, you get hard.
 I note you merciful men: you can endure
 Torture of fishes and hidalgos. Follows?

SERPHARDO.

By how much, then, the fortunes of a man
 Are made of elements refined and mixed
 Beyond a tunny's, what our science tells
 Of the star's influence hath contingency
 In special issues. Thus, the loadstone draws,
 Acts like a will to make the iron submit:
 But garlic rubbing it, that chief effect
 Lies in suspense; the iron keeps at large,
 And garlic is controller of the stone.
 And so, my lord, your horoscope declares
 Not absolutely of your sequent lot,
 But, by our lore's authentic rules, sets forth
 What gifts, what dispositions, likelihoods
 The aspects of the heavens conspired to fuse
 With your incorporate soul. Aught more than ~~this~~
 Is vulgar doctrine. For the ambient,
 Though a cause regnant, is not absolute,
 But suffers a determining restraint
 From action of the subject qualities
 In proximate motion.

DON SILVA.

Yet you smiled just now
 At some close fitting of my horoscope
 With present fact—with this resolve of mine
 To quit the fortress?

SERPHARDO.

Nay, not so; I smiled,
 Observing how the temper of your soul
 Sealed long tradition of the influence shed
 By the heavenly spheres. Here is your horoscope:
 The aspects of the Moon with Mars conjunct,
 Of Venus and the Sun with Saturn, lord
 Of the ascendant, make symbolic speech
 Whereto your words gave running paraphrase.

DON SILVA (*impatiently*).

What did I say?

SEPHARDO.

You spoke as oft you did
When I was schooling you at Córdoba,
And lessons on the noun and verb were drowned
With sudden stream of general debate
On things and actions. Always in that stream
I saw the play of babbling currents, saw
A nature o'er-endowed with opposites
Making a self alternate, where each hour
Was critic of the last, each mood too strong
For tolerance of its fellow in close yoke.
The ardent planets stationed as supreme,
Potent in action, suffer light malign
From luminaries large and coldly bright
Inspiring meditative doubt, which straight
Doubts of itself, by interposing act
Of Jupiter in the fourth house fortified
With power ancestral. So, my lord, I read
The changeless in the changing; so I read
The constant action of celestial powers
Mixed into waywardness of mortal men,
Whereof no sage's eye can trace the course
And see the close.

DON SILVA.

Fruitful result, O sage!

Certain uncertainty.

SEPHARDO.

Yea, a result

Fruitful as seeded earth, where certainty
Would be as barren as a globe of gold.
I love you, and would serve you well, my lord.
Your rashness vindicates itself too much,
Puts harness on of cobweb theory
While rushing like a cataract. Be warned.
Resolve with you is a fire-breathing steed,
But it sees visions, and may feel the air
Impassable with thoughts that come too late,
Rising from out the grave of murdered honor.
Look at your image in your horoscope:

(*Laying the horoscope before DON SILVA.*)

You are so mixed, my lord, that each to-day
May seem a maniac to its morrow.

DON SILVA (*pushing away the horoscope, rising and turning to look out at the open window*).

No!

No morrow e'er will say that I am mad
Not to renounce her. Risks! I know them all.
I've dogged each lurking, ambushed consequence.
I've handled every chance to know its shape
As blind men handle bolts. Oh, I'm too sane!
I see the Prior's nets. He does my deed;
For he has narrowed all my life to this—

That I must find her by some hidden means.

(He turns and stands close in front of SEPHARDO.)

One word, Sephardo—leave that horoscope,
Which is but iteration of myself,
And give me promise. Shall I count on you
To act upon my signal? Kings of Spain
Like me have found their refuge in a Jew,
And trusted in his counsel. You will help me?

SEPHARDO.

Yes, my lord, I will help you. Israel
Is to the nations as the body's heart:
Thus writes our poet Jehuda. I will act
So that no man may ever say through me
"Your Israel is nought," and make my deeds
The mud they fling upon my brethren.
I will not fail you, save—you know the terms:
I am a Jew, and not that infamous life
That takes on bastardy, will know no father,
So shrouds itself in the pale abstract, *Man*.
You should be sacrificed to Israel
If Israel needed it.

DON SILVA.

I fear not that.

I am no friend of fines and banishment,
Or flames that, fed on heretics, still gape,
And must have heretics made to feed them still.
I take your terms, and for the rest, your love
Will not forsake me.

SEPHARDO.

'Tis hard Roman love,
That looks away and stretches forth the sword
Bared for its master's breast to run upon.
But you will have it so. Love shall obey.

DON SILVA *turns to the window again, and is silent for a few moments, looking at the sky.*

DON SILVA.

See now, Sephardo, you would keep no faith
To smooth the path of cruelty. Confess,
The deed I would not do, save for the strait
Another brings me to (quit my command,
Resign it for brief space, I mean no more)—
Were that deed branded, then the brand should fix
On him who urged me.

SEPHARDO.

Will it, though, my lord?

DON SILVA.

I speak not of the fact but of the right.

SEPHARDO.

My lord, you said but now you were resolved.
Question not if the world will be unjust
Branding your deed. If conscience has two courts

With differing verdicts, where shall lie the appeal?
 Our law must be without us or within.
 The Highest speaks through all our people's voice,
 Custom, tradition, and old sanctities;
 Or he reveals himself by new decrees
 Of inward certitude.

DON SILVA.

My love for her
 Makes highest law, must be the voice of God.

SEPHAEDO.

I thought, but now, you seemed to make excuse,
 And plead as in some court where Spanish knights
 Are tried by other laws than those of love.

DON SILVA.

'Twas momentary. I shall dare it all.
 How the great planet glows, and looks at me,
 And seems to pierce me with his effluence!
 Were he a living God, these rays that stir
 In me the pulse of wonder were in him
 Fulness of knowledge. Are you certified,
 Sephardo, that the astral science shrinks
 To such pale ashes, dead symbolic forms
 For that congenital mixture of effects
 Which life declares without the aid of lore?
 If there are times propitious or malign
 To our first framing, then must all events
 Have favoring periods: you cull your plants
 By signal of the heavens, then why not trace
 As others would by astrologic rule
 Times of good augury for momentous acts,—
 As secret journeys?

SEPHAEDO.

Oh, my lord, the stars
 Act not as witchcraft or as muttered spells.
 I said before they are not absolute,
 And tell no fortunes. I adhere alone
 To such tradition of their agencies
 As reason fortifies.

DON SILVA.

A barren science!
 Some argue now 'tis folly. 'Twere as well
 Be of their mind. If those bright stars had will—
 But they are fatal fires, and know no love.
 Of old, I think, the world was happier
 With many gods, who held a struggling life
 As mortals do, and helped men in the straits
 Of forced misdoing. I doubt that horoscope.

(DON SILVA turns from the window and reseats himself opposite SEPHAEDO.)

I am most self-contained, and strong to bear.
 No man save you has seen my trembling lip
 Utter her name, since she was lost to me.
 I'll face the progeny of all my deeds.

SEPHAEDO.

May they be fair! No horoscope makes slaves.

'Tis but a mirror, shows one image forth,
And leaves the future dark with endless "ifs."

DON SILVA.

I marvel, my Sephardo, you can pinch
With confident selection these few grains,
And call them verity, from out the dust
Of crumbling error. Surely such thought creeps,
With insect exploration of the world.
Were I a Hebrew, now, I would be bold.
Why should you fear, not being Catholic?

SEPHARDO.

Lo! you yourself, my lord, mix subtleties
With gross belief; by momentary lapse
Conceive, with all the vulgar, that we Jews
Must hold ourselves God's outlaws, and defy
All good with blasphemy, because we hold
Your good is evil; think we must turn pale
To see our portraits painted in your hell,
And sin the more for knowing we are lost.

DON SILVA.

Read not my words with malice. I but meant,
My temper hates an over-cautious march.

SEPHARDO.

The Unnameable made not the search for truth
To suit hidalgos' temper. I abide
By that wise spirit of listening reverence
Which marks the boldest doctors of our race.
For Truth, to us, is like a living child
Born of two parents: if the parents part
And will divide the child, how shall it live?
Or, I will rather say: Two angels guide
The path of man, both aged and yet young,
As angels are, ripening through endless years.
On one he leans: some call her Memory,
And some, Tradition; and her voice is sweet,
With deep, mysterious accords: the other,
Floating above, holds down a lamp which streams
A light divine and searching on the earth,
Compelling eyes and footsteps. Memory yields,
Yet clings with loving check, and shines anew
Reflecting all the rays of that bright lamp
Our angel Reason holds. We had not walked
But for Tradition; we walk evermore
To higher paths, by brightening Reason's lamp.
Still we are purblind, tottering. I hold less
Than Aben-Ezra, of that aged lore
Brought by long centuries from Chaldæan plains;
The Jew-taught Florentine rejects it all.
For still the light is measured by the eye,
And the weak organ fails. I may see ill;
But over all belief is faithfulness,
Which fulfils vision with obedience.
So, I must grasp my morsels: truth is oft
Scattered in fragments round a stately pile

Built half of error; and the eye's defect
 May breed too much denial. But, my lord,
 I weary your sick soul. Go now with me
 Into the turret. We will watch the spheres,
 And see the constellations bend and plunge
 Into a depth of being where our eyes
 Hold them no more. We'll quit ourselves and be
 The red Aldebaran or bright Sirius,
 And sail as in a solemn voyage, bound
 On some great quest we know not.

DON SILVA.

Let us go.

She may be watching, too, and thought of her
 Sways me, as if she knew, to every act
 Of pure allegiance.

SEPHAEDO.

That is love's perfection—

Tuning the soul to all her harmonies
 So that no chord can jar. Now we will mount.

A large hall in the Castle, of Moorish architecture. On the side where the windows are, an outer gallery. Pages and other young gentlemen attached to DON SILVA's household, gathered chiefly at one end of the hall. Some are moving about; others are lounging on the carved benches; others, half stretched on pieces of matting and carpet, are gambling. ARIAS, a stripling of fifteen, sings by snatches in a boyish treble, as he walks up and down, and tosses back the nuts which another youth flings towards him. In the middle DON AMADOR, a gaunt, gray-haired soldier, in a handsome uniform, sits in a marble red-cushioned chair, with a large book spread out on his knees, from which he is reading aloud, while his voice is half drowned by the talk that is going on around him, first one voice and then another surging above the hum.

ARIAS (*singing*).

There was a holy hermit
 Who counted all things loss
 For Christ his Master's glory:
 He made an ivory cross,
 And as he knelt before it
 And wept his murdered Lord,
 The ivory turned to iron,
 The cross became a sword.

JOSE (*from the floor*).

I say, twenty cruzados! thy Galician wit can never count.

HERNANDO (*also from the floor*).

And thy Sevillian wit always counts double.

ARIAS (*singing*).

The tears that fell upon it,
 They turned to red, red rust,
 The tears that fell from off it
 Made writing in the dust.
 The holy hermit, gazing,
 Saw words upon the ground:
 "The sword be red forever
 With the blood of false Mahound."

DON AMADOR (*looking up from his book, and raising his voice*).
What, gentlemen! Our Glorious Lady defend us!

ENRIQUEZ (*from the benches*).

Serves the infidels right! They have sold Christians enough to people half the towns in Paradise. If the Queen, now, had divided the pretty damsels of Malaga among the Castilians who have been helping in the holy war, and not sent half of them to Naples . . .

ARIAS (*singing again*).

*At the battle of Clavijo
In the days of King Ramiro,
Help us, Allah! cried the Moslem,
Cried the Spaniard, Heaven's chosen,
God and Santiago!*

FABIAN.

Oh, the very tail of our chance has vanished. The royal army is breaking up—going home for the winter. The Grand Master sticks to his own border.

ARIAS (*singing*).

*Straight out-flushing like the rainbow,
See him come, celestial Baron,
Mounted knight, with red-crossed banner,
Plunging earthward to the battle,
Glorious Santiago!*

HURTADO.

Yes, yes, through the pass of By-and-by, you go to the valley of Never. We might have done a great feat, if the Marquis of Cadiz . . .

ARIAS (*sings*).

*As the flame before the swift wind,
See, he fires us, we burn with him!
Flash our swords, dash Pagans backward—
Victory he! pale fear is Allah!
God with Santiago!*

DON AMADOR (*raising his voice to a cry*).

Sangre de Dios, gentlemen!

(*He shuts the book, and lets it fall with a bang on the floor. There is instant silence.*)

To what good end is it that I, who studied at Salamanca, and can write verses agreeable to the Glorious Lady with the point of a sword which hath done harder service, am reading aloud in a clerly manner from a book which hath been culled from the flowers of all books, to instruct you in the knowledge befitting those who would be knights and worthy hidalgos? I had as lief be reading in a belfry. And gambling too! As if it were a time when we needed not the help of God and the saints! Surely for the space of one hour ye might subdue your tongues to your ears, that so your tongues might learn somewhat of civility and modesty. Wherefore am I master of the Duke's retinue, if my voice is to run along like a gutter in a storm?

HURTADO (*lifting up the book, and respectfully presenting it to DON AMADOR*).

Pardon, Don Amador! The air is so commoved by your voice, that it stirs our tongues in spite of us.

DON AMADOR (*reopening the book*).

Confess, now, it is a goose-headed trick, that when rational sounds are made for your edification, you find nought in it but an occasion for purposeless gabble.

I will report it to the Duke, and the reading-time shall be doubled, and my office of reader shall be handed over to Fray Domingo.

(While DON AMADOR has been speaking, DON SILVA, with DON ALVAR, has appeared walking in the outer gallery on which the windows are opened.)

ALL (in concert).

No, no, no.

DON AMADOR.

Are ye ready, then, to listen, if I finish the wholesome extract from the Seven Parts, wherein the wise King Alfonso hath set down the reason why knights should be of gentle birth? Will ye now be silent?

ALL.

Yes, silent.

DON AMADOR.

But when I pause, and look up, I give any leave to speak, if he hath aught pertinent to say.

(Reads.)

"And this nobility cometh in three ways: *first*, by lineage, *secondly*, by science, and *thirdly*, by valor and worthy behavior. Now, although they who gain nobility through science or good deeds are rightfully called noble and gentle; nevertheless, they are with the highest fitness so called who are noble by ancient lineage, and lead a worthy life as by inheritance from afar; and hence are more bound and constrained to act well, and guard themselves from error and wrong-doing; for in their case it is more true that by evil-doing they bring injury and shame not only on themselves, but also on those from whom they are derived."

DON AMADOR (*placing his forefinger for a mark on the page, and looking up, while he keeps his voice raised, as wishing DON SILVA to overhear him in the judicious discharge of his function*).

Hear ye that, young gentlemen? See ye not that if ye have but bad manners even, they disgrace you more than gross misdoings disgrace the low-born? Think you, Arias, it becomes the son of your house irreverently to sing and fling nuts, to the interruption of your elders?

ARIAS (*sitting on the floor, and leaning backward on his elbows*).

Nay, Don Amador; King Alfonso, they say, was a heretic, and I think that is not true writing. For noble birth gives us more leave to do ill if we like.

DON AMADOR (*lifting his brows*).

What bold and blasphemous talk is this?

ARIAS.

Why, nobles are only punished now and then, in a grand way, and have their heads cut off, like the Grand Constable. I shouldn't mind that.

JOSE.

Nonsense, Arias! nobles have their heads cut off because their crimes are noble. If they did what was unknighly, they would come to shame. Is not that true, Don Amador?

DON AMADOR.

Arias is a contumacious puppy, who will bring dishonor on his parentage. Pray, sirrah, whom did you ever hear speak as you have spoken?

ARIAS.

Nay, I speak out of mine own head. I shall go and ask the Duke.

HURTADO.

Now, now! you are too bold, Arias.

ARIAS.

Oh, he is never angry with me,—(*dropping his voice*) because the Lady Fedalma liked me. She said I was a good boy, and pretty, and that is what you are not, Hurtado.

HURTADO.

Girl-face! See, now, if you dare ask the Duke.

(DON SILVA *is just entering the hall from the gallery, with DON ALVAR behind him, intending to pass out at the other end. All rise with homage. DON SILVA bows coldly and abstractedly. ARIAS advances from the group and goes up to DON SILVA.*)

ARIAS.

My lord, is it true that a noble is more dishonored than other men if he does aught dishonorable?

DON SILVA (*first blushing deeply, and grasping his sword, then raising his hand and giving ARIAS a blow on the ear*).

Varlet!

ARIAS.

My lord, I am a gentleman.

(DON SILVA *pushes him away, and passes on hurriedly.*)

DON ALVAR (*following and turning to speak*).

Go, go! you should not speak to the Duke when you are not called upon. He is ill and much distempered.

(ARIAS *retires, flushed, with tears in his eyes. His companions look too much surprised to triumph. DON AMADOR remains silent and confused.*)

The Plaza Santiago during busy market-time. Mules and asses laden with fruits and vegetables. Stalls and booths filled with wares of all sorts. A crowd of buyers and sellers. A stalwart woman, with keen eyes, leaning over the panniers of a mule laden with apples, watches LORENZO, who is lounging through the market. As he approaches her, he is met by BLASCO.

LORENZO.

Well met, friend.

BLASCO.

Ay, for we are soon to part,
And I would see you at the hostelry,
To take my reckoning. I go forth to-day.

LORENZO.

'Tis grievous parting with good company.
I would I had the gold to pay such guests
For all my pleasure in their talk.

BLASCO.

Why, yes;

A solid-headed man of Aragon
Has matter in him that you Southerners lack.
You like my company—'tis natural.
But, look you, I have done my business well,
Have sold and ta'en commissions. I come straight
From—you know who—I like not naming him.
I'm a thick man: you reach not my backbone
With any tooth-pick; but I tell you this:

He reached it with his eye, right to the marrow.
It gave me heart that I had plate to sell,
For, saint or no saint, a good silversmith
Is wanted for God's service; and my plate—
He judged it well—bought nobly.

LORENZO.

A great man,

And holy!

BLASCO.

Yes, I'm glad I leave to-day.
For there are stories give a sort of smell—
One's nose has fancies. A good trader, sir,
Likes not this plague of lapsing in the air,
Most caught by men with funds. And they *do* say
There's a great terror here in Moors and Jews,
I would say, Christians of unhappy blood.
'Tis monstrous, sure, that men of substance lapse,
And risk their property. I know I'm sound.
No heresy was ever bait to me. Whate'er
Is the right faith, that I believe—nought else.

LORENZO.

Ay, truly, for the flavor of true faith
Once known must sure be sweetest to the taste.
But an uneasy mood is now abroad
Within the town; partly, for that the Duke
Being sorely sick, has yielded the command
To Don Diego, a most valiant man,
More Catholic than the Holy Father's self,
Half chiding God that he will tolerate
A Jew or Arab; though 'tis plain they're made
For profit of good Christians. And weak heads—
Panic will knit all disconnected facts—
Draw hence belief in evil auguries,
Rumors of accusation and arrest,
All air-begotten. Sir, you need not go.
But if it must be so, I'll follow you
In fifteen minutes—finish marketing,
Then be at home to speed you on your way.

BLASCO.

Do so. I'll back to Saragossa straight.
The court and nobles are retiring now
And wending northward. There'll be fresh demand
For bells and images against the Spring,
When doubtless our great Catholic sovereigns
Will move to conquest of these eastern parts,
And cleanse Granada from the infidel.
Stay, sir, with God, until we meet again!

LORENZO.

Go, sir, with God, until I follow you!

(Exit BLASCO. LORENZO passes on towards the market-woman, who, as he approaches, raises herself from her leaning attitude.)

LORENZO.

Good-day, my mistress. How's your merchandise?

Fit for a host to buy? Your apples now,
They have fair cheeks; how are they at the core?

MARKET-WOMAN.

Good, good, sir! Taste and try. See, here is one
Weighs a man's head. The best are bound with tow:
They're worth the pains, to keep the peel from splits.

(She takes out an apple bound with tow, and, as she puts it into LORENZO'S hand, speaks in a lower tone.)

'Tis called the Miracle. You open it,
And find it full of speech.

LORENZO.

Ay, give it me,
I'll take it to the Doctor in the tower.
He feeds on fruit, and if he likes the sort
I'll buy them for him. Meanwhile, drive your ass
Round to my hostelry. I'll straight be there.
You'll not refuse some barter?

MARKET-WOMAN.

No, not I.
Feather and skins.

LORENZO.

Good, till we meet again.

(LORENZO, after smelling at the apple, puts it into a pouch-like basket which hangs before him, and walks away. The woman drives off the mule.)

A LETTER.

"Zarca, the chieftain of the Gypsies, greets
The King El Zagal. Let the force be sent
With utmost swiftness to the Pass of Luz.
A good five hundred added to my bands
Will master all the garrison: the town
Is half with us, and will not lift an arm
Save on our side. My scouts have found a way
Where once we thought the fortress most secure:
Spying a man upon the height, they traced,
By keen conjecture piecing broken sight,
His downward path, and found its issue. There
A file of us can mount, surprise the fort
And give the signal to our friends within
To ope the gates for our confederate bands,
Who will lie eastward ambushed by the rocks,
Waiting the night. Enough; give me command,
Bedmár is yours. Chief Zarca will redeem
His pledge of highest service to the Moor:
Let the Moor too be faithful and repay
The Gypsy with the furtherance he needs
To lead his people over Bahr el Scham
And plant them on the shore of Africa.
So may the King El Zagal live as one
Who, trusting Allah will be true to him,
Maketh himself as Allah true to friends."

BOOK III.

QUIT now the town, and with a journeying dream
 Swift as the wings of sound yet seeming slow
 Through multitudinous pulsing of stored sense
 And spiritual space, see walls and towers
 Lie in the silent whiteness of a trance,
 Giving no sign of that warm life within
 That moves and murmurs through their hidden heart.
 Pass o'er the mountain, wind in sombre shade,
 Then wind into the light and see the town
 Shrunk to white crust upon the darker rock.
 Turn east and south, descend, then rise anew
 'Mid smaller mountains ebbing towards the plain:
 Scent the fresh breath of the height-loving herbs
 That, trodden by the pretty parted hoofs
 Of nimble goats, sigh at the innocent bruise,
 And with a mingled difference exquisite
 Pour a sweet burden on the buoyant air.
 Pause now and be all ear. Far from the south,
 Seeking the listening silence of the heights,
 Comes a slow-dying sound—the Moslems' call
 To prayer in afternoon. Bright in the sun
 Like tall white sails on a green shadowy sea
 Stand Moorish watch-towers: 'neath that eastern sky
 Couches unseen the strength of Moorish Baza;
 Where the meridian bends lies Guadix, hold
 Of brave El Zagal. This is Moorish land,
 Where Allah lives unconquered in dark breasts
 And blesses still the many-nourishing earth
 With dark-armed industry. See from the steep
 The scattered olives hurry in gray throngs
 Down towards the valley, where the little stream
 Parts a green hollow 'twixt the gentler slopes:
 And in that hollow, dwellings: not white homes
 Of building Moors, but little swarthy tents
 Such as of old perhaps on Asian plains,
 Or wending westward past the Caucasus,
 Our fathers raised to rest in. Close they swarm
 About two taller tents, and viewed afar
 Might seem a dark-robed crowd in penitence
 That silent kneel; but come now in their midst
 And watch a busy, bright-eyed, sportive life!
 Tall maidens bend to feed the tethered goat,
 The ragged kirtle fringing at the knee
 Above the living curves, the shoulder's smoothness
 Parting the torrent strong of ebon hair.
 Women with babes, the wild and neutral glance
 Swayed now to sweet desire of mothers' eyes,
 Rock their strong cradling arms and chant low strains
 Taught by monotonous and soothing winds
 That fall at night-time on the dozing ear.
 The crones plait reeds, or shred the vivid herbs
 Into the caldron: tiny urchins crawl

Or sit and gurgle forth their infant joy.
 Lads lying sphinx-like with uplifted breast
 Propped on their elbows, their black manes tossed back,
 Fling up the coin and watch its fatal fall,
 Dispute and scramble, run and wrestle fierce,
 Then fall to play and fellowship again;
 Or in a thieving swarm they run to plague
 The grandsires, who return with rabbits slung,
 And with the mules fruit-laden from the fields.
 Some striplings choose the smooth stones from the brook
 To serve the slingers, cut the twigs for snares,
 Or trim the hazel-wands, or at the bark
 Of some exploring dog they dart away
 With swift precision towards a moving speck.
 These are the brood of Zarca's Gypsy tribe;
 Most like an earth-born race bred by the Sun
 On some rich tropic soil, the father's light
 Flashing in coal-black eyes, the mother's blood
 With bounteous elements feeding their young limbs.
 The stalwart men and youths are at the wars
 Following their chief, all save a trusty band
 Who keep strict watch along the northern heights.

But see, upon a pleasant spot removed
 From the camp's hubbub, where the thicket strong
 Of huge-eared cactus makes a bordering curve
 And casts a shadow, lies a sleeping man
 With Spanish hat screening his upturned face,
 His doublet loose, his right arm backward flung,
 His left caressing close the long-necked lute
 That seems to sleep too, leaning tow'rd its lord.
 He draws deep breath secure but not unwatched.
 Moving a-tiptoe, silent as the elves,
 As mischievous too, trip three bare-footed girls
 Not opened yet to womanhood—dark flowers
 In slim long buds: some paces farther off
 Gathers a little white-teethed shaggy group,
 A grinning chorus to the merry play.
 The tripping girls have robbed the sleeping man
 Of all his ornaments. Hita is decked
 With an embroidered scarf across her rags;
 Tralla, with thorns for pins, sticks two rosettes
 Upon her threadbare woollen; Hinda now,
 Prettiest and boldest, tucks her kirtle up
 As wallet for the stolen buttons—then
 Bends with her knife to cut from off the hat
 The aigrette and long feather; deftly cuts,
 Yet wakes the sleeper, who with sudden start
 Shakes off the masking hat and shows the face
 Of Juan: Hinda swift as thought leaps back,
 But carries off the spoil triumphantly,
 And leads the chorus of a happy laugh,
 Running with all the naked-footed imps,
 Till with safe survey all can face about
 And watch for signs of stimulating chase,
 While Hinda ties long grass around her brow
 To stick the feather in with majesty.

Juan still sits contemplative, with looks
Alternate at the spoilers and their work.

JUAN.

Ah, you marauding kite—my feather gone!
My belt, my scarf, my buttons and rosettes!
This is to be a brother of your tribe!
The fiery-blooded children of the Sun—
So says chief Zarca—children of the Sun!
Ay, ay, the black and stinging flies he breeds
To plague the decent body of mankind.
"Orpheus, professor of the *gai saber*,
Made all the brutes polite by dint of song."
Pregnant—but as a guide in daily life
Delusive. For if song and music cure
The barbarous trick of thieving, 'tis a cure
That works as slowly as old Doctor Time
In curing folly. Why, the minxes there
Have rhythm in their toes, and music rings
As readily from them as from little bells
Swung by the breeze. Well, I will try the physic.

(He touches his lute.)

Hem! taken rightly, any single thing,
The Rabbis say, implies all other things.
A knotty task, though, the unravelling
Meum and *Tuum* from a saraband:
It needs a subtle logic, nay, perhaps
A good large property, to see the thread.

(He touches the lute again.)

There's more of odd than even in this world.
Else pretty sinners would not be let off
Sooner than ugly; for if honeycombs
Are to be got by stealing, they should go
Where life is bitterest on the tongue. And yet—
Because this minx has pretty ways I wink
At all her tricks, though if a flat-faced lass,
With eyes askew, were half as bold as she,
I should chastise her with a hazel switch.
I'm a plucked peacock—even my voice and wit
Without a tail!—why, any fool detects
The absence of your tail, but twenty fools
May not detect the presence of your wit.

(He touches his lute again.)

Well, I must coax my tail back cunningly,
For to run after these brown lizards—ah!
I think the lizards lift their ears at this.

(As he thrums his lute the lads and girls gradually approach: he touches it more briskly, and HINDA, advancing, begins to move arms and legs with an initiatory dancing movement, smiling coaxingly at JUAN. He suddenly stops, lays down his lute and folds his arms.)

JUAN.

What, you expect a tune to dance to, eh?

HINDA, HITA, TRALLA, AND THE BEST
(clapping their hands).

Yes, yes, a tune, a tune!

JUAN.

But that is what you cannot have, my sweet brothers and sisters. The tunes are all dead—dead as the tunes of the lark when you have plucked his wings off; dead as the song of the grasshopper when the ass has swallowed him. I can play and sing no more. Hinda has killed my tunes.

(All cry out in consternation. HINDA gives a wail and tries to examine the lute.)

JUAN *(waving her off)*.

Understand, Señora Hinda, that the tunes are in me; they are not in the lute till I put them there. And if you cross my humor, I shall be as tuneless as a bag of wool. If the tunes are to be brought to life again, I must have my feather back.

(HINDA kisses his hands and feet coaxingly.)

No, no! not a note will come for coaxing. The feather, I say, the feather!

(HINDA sorrowfully takes off the feather, and gives it to JUAN.)

Ah, now let us see. Perhaps a tune will come.

(He plays a measure, and the three girls begin to dance; then he suddenly stops.)

JUAN.

No, the tune will not come: it wants the aigrette *(pointing to it on Hinda's neck)*.

(HINDA, with rather less hesitation, but again sorrowfully, takes off the aigrette, and gives it to him.)

JUAN.

Ha! *(He plays again, but, after rather a longer time, again stops.)* No, no; 'tis the buttons are wanting, Hinda, the buttons. This tune feeds chiefly on buttons—a greedy tune. It wants one, two, three, four, five, six. Good!

(After HINDA has given up the buttons, and JUAN has laid them down one by one, he begins to play again, going on longer than before, so that the dancers become excited by the movement. Then he stops.)

JUAN.

Ah, Hita, it is the belt, and, Tralla, the rosettes—both are wanting. I see the tune will not go on without them.

(HITA and TRALLA take off the belt and rosettes, and lay them down quickly, being fired by the dancing, and eager for the music. All the articles lie by JUAN'S side on the ground.)

JUAN.

Good, good, my docile wild-cats! Now I think the tunes are all alive again. Now you may dance and sing too. Hinda, my little screamer, lead off with the song I taught you, and let us see if the tune will go right on from beginning to end.

(He plays. The dance begins again, HINDA singing. All the other boys and girls join in the chorus, and all at last dance wildly.)

Song.

*All things journey: sun and moon,
Morning, noon, and afternoon,
Night and all her stars:
'Tis at the east and western bars
Round they journey,
Come and go!
We go with them!
For to roam and ever roam
Is the Zingali's loved home.*

*Earth is good, the hillside breaks
 By the ashen roots and makes
 Hungry nostrils glad:
 Then we run till we are mad,
 Like the horses,
 And we cry,
 None shall catch us!
 Swift winds wing us—we are free—
 Drink the air—we Zincali!*

*Falls the snow: the pine-branch split,
 Call the fire out, see it flit,
 Through the dry leaves run,
 Spread and glow, and make a sun
 In the dark tent:
 O warm dark!
 Warm as conies!
 Strong fire loves us, we are warm!
 Who the Zincali shall harm?*

*Onward journey: fires are spent;
 Sunward, sunward! lift the tent,
 Run before the rain,
 Through the pass, along the plain.
 Hurry, hurry,
 Lift us, wind!
 Like the horses.
 For to roam and ever roam
 Is the Zincali's loved home.*

(When the dance is at its height, HINDA breaks away from the rest, and dances round JUAN, who is now standing. As he turns a little to watch her movement, some of the boys skip towards the feather, aigrette, etc., snatch them up, and run away, swiftly followed by HITA, TRALLA, and the rest. HINDA, as she turns again, sees them, screams, and falls in her whirling; but immediately gets up, and rushes after them, still screaming with rage.)

JUAN.

Santiago! these imps get bolder. Haha! Señora Hinda, this finishes your lesson in ethics. You have seen the advantage of giving up stolen goods. Now you see the ugliness of thieving when practised by others. That fable of mine about the tunes was excellently devised. I feel like an ancient sage instructing our lisping ancestors. My memory will descend as the Orpheus of Gypsies. But I must prepare a rod for those rascals. I'll bastinado them with prickly pears. It seems to me these needles will have a sound moral teaching in them.

(While JUAN takes a knife from his belt, and surveys a bush of the prickly pear, HINDA returns.)

JUAN.

Pray, Señora, why do you fume? Did you want to steal my ornaments again yourself?

HINDA (sobbing).

No; I thought you would give them me back again.

JUAN.

What, did you want the tunes to die again? Do you like finery better than dancing?

HINDA.

Oh, that was a tale! I shall tell tales too, when I want to get anything I can't steal. And I know what I will do. I shall tell the boys I've found some little foxes, and I will never say where they are till they give me back the feather!

(She runs off again.)

JUAN.

Hem! the disciple seems to seize the mode sooner than the matter. Teaching virtue with this prickly pear may only teach the youngsters to use a new weapon; as your teaching orthodoxy with fagots may only bring up a fashion of roasting. Dios! my remarks grow too pregnant—my wits get a plethora by solitary feeding on the produce of my own wisdom.

(As he puts up his knife again, HINDA comes running back, and crying, "Our Queen! our Queen!") JUAN adjusts his garments and his lute, while HINDA turns to meet FEDALMA, who wears a Moorish dress, her black hair hanging round her in plaits, a white turban on her head, a dagger by her side. She carries a scarf on her left arm, which she holds up as a shade.)

FEDALMA *(patting HINDA's head)*.

How now, wild one? You are hot and panting. Go to my tent, and help Nouna to plait reeds.

(HINDA kisses FEDALMA's hand, and runs off. FEDALMA advances towards JUAN, who kneels to take up the edge of her cymar, and kisses it.)

JUAN.

How is it with you, lady? You look sad.

FEDALMA.

Oh, I am sick at heart. The eye of day,
The insistent summer sun, seems pitiless,
Shining in all the barren crevices
Of weary life, leaving no shade, no dark,
Where I may dream that hidden waters lie;
As pitiless as to some shipwrecked man,
Who gazing from his narrow shoal of sand
On the wide unspotted round of blue and blue
Sees that full light is errorless despair.
The insects' hum that slurs the silent dark
Startles and seems to cheat me, as the tread
Of coming footsteps cheats the midnight watcher
Who holds her heart and waits to hear them pause,
And hears them never pause, but pass and die.
Music sweeps by me as a messenger
Carrying a message that is not for me.
The very sameness of the hills and sky
Is obduracy, and the lingering hours
Wait round me dumbly, like superfluous slaves,
Of whom I want nought but the secret news
They are forbid to tell. And, Juan, you—
You, too, are cruel—would be over-wise
In judging your friend's needs, and choose to hide
Something I crave to know.

JUAN.

I, lady?

FEDALMA.

You,

JUAN.

I never had the virtue to hide aught,
Save what a man is whipped for publishing.
I'm no more reticent than the voluble air—
Dote on disclosure—never could contain
The latter half of all my sentences,
But for the need to utter the beginning.
My lust to tell is so importunate
That it abridges every other vice,
And makes me temperate for want of time.
I dull sensation in the haste to say
'Tis this or that, and choke report with surmise.
Judge then, dear lady, if I could be mute
When but a glance of yours had bid me speak.

FEDALMA.

Nay, sing such falsities!—you mock me worse
By speech that gravely seems to ask belief.
You are but babbling in a part you play
To please my father. Oh, 'tis well meant, say you—
Pity for woman's weakness. Take my thanks.

JUAN.

Thanks angrily bestowed are red-hot coin
Burning your servant's palm.

FEDALMA.

Deny it not,
You know how many leagues this camp of ours
Lies from Bedmár—what mountains lie between—
Could tell me if you would about the Duke—
That he is comforted, sees how he gains
Losing the Zíncala, finds now how slight
The thread Fedalma made in that rich web,
A Spanish noble's life. No, that is false!
He never would think lightly of our love.
Some evil has befallen him—he's slain—
Has sought for danger and has beckoned death
Because I made all life seem treachery.
Tell me the worst—be merciful—no worst,
Against the hideous painting of my fear,
Would not show like a better.

JUAN.

If I speak,
Will you believe your slave? For truth is scant;
And where the appetite is still to hear
And not believe, falsehood would stint it less.
How say you? Does your hunger's fancy choose
The meagre fact?

FEDALMA (*seating herself on the ground*).

Yes, yes, the truth, dear Juan.
Sit now, and tell me all.

JUAN.

That all is nought.
I can unleash my fancy if you wish

And hunt for phantoms: shoot an airy guess
 And bring down airy likelihood—some lie
 Masked cunningly to look like royal truth
 And cheat the shooter, while King Fact goes free;
 Or else some image of reality
 That doubt will handle and reject as false.
 As for conjecture—I can thread the sky
 Like any swallow, but, if you insist
 On knowledge that would guide a pair of feet
 Right to Bedmár, across the Moorish bounds,
 A mule that dreams of stumbling over stones
 Is better stored.

FEDALMA.

And you have gathered nought
 About the border wars? No news, no hint
 Of any rumors that concern the Duke—
 Rumors kept from me by my father?

JUAN.

None.

Your father trusts no secret to the echoes.
 Of late his movements have been hid from all
 Save those few hundred chosen Gypsy breasts
 He carries with him. Think you he's a man
 To let his projects slip from out his belt,
 Then whisper him who haps to find them strayed
 To be so kind as keep his counsel well?
 Why, if he found me knowing aught too much,
 He would straight gag or strangle me, and say,
 "Poor hound! it was a pity that his bark
 Could chance to mar my plans: he loved my daughter—
 The idle hound had nought to do but love,
 So followed to the battle and got crushed."

FEDALMA (*holding out her hand, which JUAN kisses*).

Good JUAN, I could have no nobler friend.
 You'd ope your veins and let your life-blood out
 To save another's pain, yet hide the deed
 With jesting—say, 'twas merest accident,
 A sportive scratch that went by chance too deep—
 And die content with men's slight thoughts of you,
 Finding your glory in another's joy.

JUAN.

Dub not my likings virtues, lest they get
 A drug-like taste, and breed a nausea.
 Honey's not sweet, commended as cathartic.
 Such names are parchment labels upon gems,
 Hiding their color. What is lovely seen
 Priced in a tariff?—lapis lazuli,
 Such bulk, so many drachmas: amethysts
 Quoted at so much; sapphires higher still.
 The stone like solid heaven in its blueness
 Is what I care for, not its name or price.
 So, if I live or die to serve my friend,
 'Tis for my love—'tis for my friend alone,

And not for any rate that friendship bears
 In heaven or on earth. Nay, I romance—
 I talk of Roland and the ancient peers.
 In me 'tis hardly friendship, only lack
 Of a substantial self that holds a weight;
 So I kiss larger things and roll with them.

FEDALMA.

Oh, you will never hide your soul from me;
 I've seen the jewel's flash, and know 'tis there,
 Muffle it as you will. That foam-like talk
 Will not wash out a fear which blots the good
 Your presence brings me. Oft I'm pierced afresh
 Through all the pressure of my selfish griefs
 By thought of you. It was a rash resolve
 Made you disclose yourself when you kept watch
 About the terrace wall:—your pity leaped,
 Seeing alone my ills and not your loss,
 Self-doomed to exile. Juan, you must repent.
 'Tis not in nature that resolve, which feeds
 On strenuous actions, should not pine and die
 In these long days of empty listlessness.

JUAN.

Repent? Not I. Repentance is the weight
 Of indigested meals ta'en yesterday.
 'Tis for large animals that gorge on prey,
 Not for a honey-sipping butterfly.
 I am a thing of rhythm and redondillas—
 The momentary rainbow on the spray
 Made by the thundering torrent of men's lives:
 No matter whether I am here or there;
 I still catch sunbeams. And in Africa,
 Where melons and all fruits, they say, grow large.
 Fables are real, and the apes polite,
 A poet, too, may prosper past belief:
 I shall grow epic, like the Florentine,
 And sing the founding of our infant state,
 Sing the new Gypsy Carthage.

FEDALMA.

Africa!

Would we were there! Under another heaven,
 In lands where neither love nor memory
 Can plant a selfish hope—in lands so far
 I should not seem to see the outstretched arms
 That seek me, or to hear the voice that calls.
 I should feel distance only and despair;
 So rest forever from the thought of bliss,
 And wear my weight of life's great chain unstruggling.
 Juan, if I could know he would forget—
 Nay, not forget, forgive me—be content
 That I forsook him for no joy, but sorrow,
 For sorrow chosen rather than a joy
 That destiny made base! Then he would taste
 No bitterness in sweet, sad memory,
 And I should lived unblemished in his thought,

Hallowed like her who dies an unwed bride.
Our words have wings, but fly not where we would.
Could mine but reach him, Juan!

JUAN.

Speak the wish—
My feet have wings—I'll be your Mercury.
I fear no shadowed perils by the way.
No man will wear the sharpness of his sword
On me. Nay, I'm a herald of the Muse,
Sacred for Moors and Spaniards. I will go—
Will fetch you tidings for an amulet.
But stretch not hope too strongly towards that mark
As issue of my wandering. Given, I cross
Safely the Moorish border, reach Bedmár:
Fresh counsels may prevail there, and the Duke
Being absent in the field, I may be trapped.
Men who are sour at missing larger game
May wing a chattering sparrow for revenge.
It is a chance no further worth the note
Than as a warning, lest you feared worse ill
If my return were stayed. I might be caged;
They would not harm me else. Untimely death,
The red auxiliary of the skeleton,
Has too much work on hand to think of me;
Or, if he cares to slay me, I shall fall
Choked with a grape-stone for economy.
The likelier chance is that I go and come,
Bringing you comfort back.

FEDALMA (*starts from her seat and walks to a little distance, standing a few moments with her back towards JUAN, then she turns round quickly, and goes towards him*).

No, Juan, no!

Those yearning words came from a soul infirm,
Crying and struggling at the pain of bonds
Which yet it would not loosen. He knows all—
All that he needs to know: I said farewell:
I stepped across the cracking earth and knew
'Twould yawn behind me. I must walk right on.
No, I will not win aught by risking you:
That risk would poison my poor hope. Besides,
'Twere treachery in me: my father wills
That we—all here—should rest within this camp.
If I can never live, like him, on faith
In glorious morrows, I am resolute.
While he treads painfully with stillest step
And beady brow, pressed 'neath the weight of arms,
Shall I, to ease my fevered restlessness,
Raise peevish moans, shattering that fragile silence?
No! On the close-thronged spaces of the earth
A battle rages: Fate has carried me
'Mid the thick arrows: I will keep my stand—
Not shrink and let the shaft pass by my breast
To pierce another. Oh, 'tis written large
The thing I have to do. But you, dear Juan,
Renounce, endure, are brave, unurged by aught
Save the sweet overflow of your good will.

(*She seats herself again.*)

JUAN.

Nay, I endure nought worse than napping sheep
When nimble birds uproot a fleecy lock
To line their nest with. See! your bondsman, Queen,
The minstrel of your court, is featherless;
Deforms your presence by a moulting garb;
Shows like a roadside bush culled of its buds
Yet, if your graciousness will not disdain
A poor plucked songster—shall he sing to you?
Some lay of afternoons—some ballad strain
Of those who ached once but are sleeping now
Under the sun-warmed flowers? 'Twill cheat the time.

FEDALMA.

Thanks, Juan—later, when this hour is passed.
My soul is clogged with self; it could not float
On with the pleasing sadness of your song.
Leave me in this green spot, but come again,—
Come with the lengthening shadows.

JUAN.

Then your slave
Will go to chase the robbers. Queen, farewell!

FEDALMA.

Best friend, my well-spring in the wilderness!

[While Juan sped along the stream, there came
From the dark tents a ringing joyous shout
That thrilled Fedalma with a summons grave
Yet welcome, too. Straightway she rose and stood,
All languor banished, with a soul suspense,
Like one who waits high presence, listening.
Was it a message, or her father's self
That made the camp so glad?

It was himself!

She saw him now advancing, girt with arms
That seemed like idle trophies hung for show
Beside the weight and fire of living strength
That made his frame. He glanced with absent triumph.
As one who conquers in some field afar
And bears off unseen spoil. But nearing her,
His terrible eyes intense sent forth new rays—
A sudden sunshine where the lightning was
'Twixt meeting dark. All tenderly he laid
His hand upon her shoulder; tenderly,
His kiss upon her brow.]

ZARCA.

My royal daughter!

FEDALMA.

Father, I joy to see your safe return.

ZARCA.

Nay, I but stole the time, as hungry men
Steal from the morrow's meal, made a forced march,

Left Hassan as my watch-dog, all to see
My daughter, and to feel her famished hope
With news of promise.

FEDALMA.

Is the task achieved
That was to be the herald of our flight?

ZARCA.

Not outwardly, but to my inward vision
Things are achieved when they are well begun.
The perfect archer calls the deer his own
While yet the shaft is whistling. His keen eye
Never sees failure, sees the mark alone.
You have heard nought, then—had no messenger?

FEDALMA.

I, father? no: each quiet day has fled
Like the same moth, returning with slow wing,
And pausing in the sunshine.

ZARCA.

It is well.
You shall not long count days in weariness.
Ere the full moon has waned again to new,
We shall reach Almería: Berber ships
Will take us for their freight, and we shall go
With plenteous spoil, not stolen, bravely won
By service done on Spaniards. Do you shrink?
Are you aught less than a true Zíncala?

FEDALMA.

No; but I am more. The Spaniards fostered me.

ZARCA.

They stole you first, and reared you for the flames.
I found you, rescued you, that you might live
A Zíncala's life; I saved you from their doom.
Your bridal bed had been the rack.

FEDALMA (*in a low tone*).

They meant—
To seize me?—ere he came?

ZARCA.

Yes, I know all.
They found your chamber empty.

FEDALMA (*eagerly*).

Then you know—
(*checking herself.*)

Father, my soul would be less laggard, fed
With fuller trust.

ZARCA.

My daughter, I must keep
The Arab's secret. Arabs are our friends,

Grappling for life with Christians who lay waste
 Granada's valleys, and with devilish hoofs
 Trample the young green corn, with devilish play
 Fell blossomed trees, and tear up well-pruned vines;
 Cruel as tigers to the vanquished brave,
 They wring out gold by oaths they mean to break;
 Take pay for pity and are pitiless;
 Then tinkle bells above the desolate earth
 And praise their monstrous gods, supposed to love
 The flattery of liars. I will strike
 The full-gorged dragon. You, my child, must watch
 The battle with a heart, not fluttering
 But duteous, firm-weighted by resolve,
 Choosing between two lives, like her who holds
 A dagger which must pierce one of two breasts,
 And one of them her father's. You divine—
 I speak not closely, but in parables;
 Put one for many.

FEDALMA (*collecting herself and looking firmly at ZARCA*).

Then it is your will

That I ask nothing?

ZARCA.

You shall know enough

To trace the sequence of the seed and flower.
 El Zagal trusts me, rates my counsel high:
 He, knowing I have won a grant of lands
 Within the Berber's realm, wills me to be
 The tongue of his good cause in Africa,
 So gives us furtherance in our pilgrimage
 For service hoped, as well as service done
 In that great feat of which I am the eye,
 And my five hundred Gypsies the best arm.
 More, I am charged by other noble Moors
 With messages of weight to Telemsán.
 Ha, your eye flashes. Are you glad?

FEDALMA.

Yes, glad

That men can greatly trust a Zincalo.

ZARCA.

Why, fighting for dear life men choose their swords
 For cutting only, not for ornament.
 What nought but Nature gives, man takes perforce
 Where she bestows it, though in vilest place.
 Can he compress invention out of pride,
 Make heirship do the work of muscle, sail
 Towards great discoveries with a pedigree?
 Sick men ask cures, and Nature serves not here
 Daintily as a feast. A blacksmith once
 Founded a dynasty, and raised on high
 The leathern apron over armies spread
 Between the mountains like a lake of steel.

FEDALMA (*bitterly*).

To be contemned, then, is fair augury.
 That pledge of future good at least is ours.

ZARCA.

Let men condemn us: 'tis such blind contempt
That leaves the wingèd broods to thrive in warmth
Unheeded, till they fill the air like storms.
So we shall thrive—still darkly shall draw force
Into a new and multitudinous life
That likeness fashions to community,
Mother divine of customs, faith and laws.
'Tis ripeness, 'tis fame's zenith that kills hope.
Huge oaks are dying, forests yet to come
Lie in the twigs and rotten-seeming seeds.

FEDALMA.

And our wild Zincali? 'Neath their rough husk
Can you discern such seed? You said our band
Was the best arm of some hard enterprise;
They give out sparks of virtue, then, and show
There's metal in their earth?

ZARCA.

Ay, metal fine
In my brave Gypsies. Not the lithest Moor
Has lither limbs for scaling, keener eye
To mark the meaning of the furthest speck
That tells of change; and they are disciplined
By faith in me, to such obedience
As needs no spy. My scalers and my scouts
Are to the Moorish force they're leagued withal
As bow-string to the bow; while I, their chief,
Command the enterprise and guide the will
Of Moorish captains, as the pilot guides
With eye-instructed hand the passive helm.
For high device is still the highest force,
And he who holds the secret of the wheel
May make the rivers do what work he would.
With thoughts impalpable we clutch men's souls,
Weaken the joints of armies, make them fly
Like dust and leaves before the viewless wind.
Tell me what's mirrored in the tiger's heart,
I'll rule that too.

FEDALMA (*wrought to a glow of admiration*).

O my imperial father!

'Tis where there breathes a mighty soul like yours
That men's contempt is of good augury.

ZARCA (*seizing both FEDALMA's hands, and looking at her searchingly*).

And you, my daughter, what are you—if not
The Zincalo's child? Say, does not his great hope
Thrill in your veins like shouts of victory?
'Tis a vile life that like a garden pool
Lies stagnant in the round of personal loves;
That has no ear save for the tickling lute
Set to small measures—deaf to all the beats
Of that large music rolling o'er the world:

A miserable, petty, low-roofed life,
 That knows the mighty orbits of the skies
 Through nought save light or dark in its own cabin.
 The very brutes will feel the force of kind
 And move together, gathering a new soul—
 The soul of multitudes. Say now, my child,
 You will not falter, not look back and long
 For unfledged ease in some soft alien nest.
 The crane with outspread wing that heads the file
 Pauses not, feels no backward impulses:
 Behind it summer was, and is no more;
 Before it lies the summer it will reach
 Or perish in mid-ocean. You no less
 Must feel the force sublime of growing life.
 New thoughts are urgent as the growth of wings;
 The widening vision is imperious
 As higher members bursting the worm's sheath.
 You cannot grovel in the worm's delights:
 You must take wingèd pleasures, wingèd pains.
 Are you not steadfast? Will you live or die
 For aught below your royal heritage?
 To him who holds the flickering brief torch
 That lights a beacon for the perishing,
 Aught else is crime. Would you let drop the torch?

FEDALMA.

Father, my soul is weak, the mist of tears
 Still rises to my eyes, and hides the goal
 Which to your undimmed sight is fixed and clear.
 But if I cannot plant resolve on hope,
 It will stand firm on certainty of woe.
 I choose the ill that is most like to end
 With my poor being. Hopes have precarious life.
 They are oft blighted, withered, snapped sheer off
 In vigorous growth and turned to rottenness.
 But faithfulness can feed on suffering,
 And knows no disappointment. Trust in me!
 If it were needed, this poor trembling hand
 Should grasp the torch—strive not to let it fall
 Though it were burning down close to my flesh,
 No beacon lighted yet: through the damp dark
 I should still hear the cry of gasping swimmers.
 Father, I will be true!

ZAROA.

I trust that word.
 And, for your sadness—you are young—the bruise
 Will leave no mark. The worst of misery
 Is when a nature framed for noblest things
 Condemns itself in youth to petty joys,
 And, sore athirst for air, breathes scanty life
 Gasping from out the shallows. You are saved
 From such poor doubleness. The life we choose
 Breathes high, and sees a full-arched firmament.
 Our deeds shall speak like rock-hewn messages,
 Teaching great purpose to the distant time.

Now I must hasten back. I shall but speak
 To Nadar of the order he must keep
 In setting watch and victualling. The stars
 And the young moon must see me at my post.
 Nay, rest you here. Farewell, my younger self—
 Strong-hearted daughter! Shall I live in you
 When the earth covers me?

FEDALMA.

My father, death
 Should give your will divineness, make it strong
 With the beseechings of a mighty soul
 That left its work unfinished. Kiss me now:

(They embrace, and she adds tremulously as they part,)

And when you see fair hair, be pitiful.

[Exit ZARCA.]

(FEDALMA seats herself on the bank, leans her head forward, and covers her face with her drapery. While she is seated thus, HINDA comes from the bank, with a branch of musk roses in her hand. Seeing FEDALMA with head bent and covered, she pauses, and begins to move on tiptoe.)

HINDA.

Our Queen! Can she be crying? There she sits
 As I did every day when my dog Saad
 Sickened and yelled, and seemed to yell so loud
 After we buried him, I oped his grave.

(She comes forward on tiptoe, kneels at FEDALMA's feet, and embraces them.)

FEDALMA uncovers her head.)

FEDALMA.

Hinda! what is it?

HINDA.

Queen, a branch of roses—
 So sweet, you'll love to smell them. 'Twas the last.
 I climbed the bank to get it before Tralla,
 And slipped and scratched my arm. But I don't mind.
 You love the roses—so do I. I wish
 The sky would rain down roses, as they rain
 From off the shaken bush. Why will it not?
 Then all the valley would be pink and white
 And soft to tread on. They would fall as light
 As feathers, smelling sweet; and it would be
 Like sleeping and yet waking, all at once!
 Over the sea, Queen, where we soon shall go,
 Will it rain roses?

FEDALMA.

No, my prattler, no!
 It never will rain roses: when we want
 To have more roses we must plant more trees.
 But you want nothing, little one—the world
 Just suits you as it suits the tawny squirrels.
 Come, you want nothing.

HINDA.

Yes, I want more berries—
 Red ones—to wind about my neck and arms

When I am married—on my ankles too
I want to wind red berries, and on my head.

FEDALMA.

Who is it you are fond of? Tell me, now.

HINDA.

O Queen, you know! It could be no one else
But Ismaël. He catches all the birds,
Knows where the speckled fish are, scales the rocks,
And sings and dances with me when I like.
How should I marry and not marry him?

FEDALMA.

Should you have loved him, had he been a Moor,
Or white Castilian?

HINDA (*starting to her feet, then kneeling again*).

Are you angry, Queen?

Say why you will think shame of your poor Hinda?
She'd sooner be a rat and hang on thorns
To parch until the wind had scattered her,
Than be an outcast, spit at by her tribe.

FEDALMA.

I think no evil—am not angry, child.
But would you part from Ismaël? leave him now
If your chief bade you—said it was for good
To all your tribe that you must part from him?

HINDA (*giving a sharp cry*).

Ah, will he say so?

FEDALMA (*almost fierce in her earnestness*).

Nay, child, answer me.

Could you leave Ismaël? get into a boat
And see the waters widen 'twixt you two
Till all was water and you saw him not,
And knew that you would never see him more?
If 'twas your chief's command, and if he said
Your tribe would all be slaughtered, die of plague,
Of famine—madly drink each other's blood...

HINDA (*trembling*).

O Queen, if it is so, tell Ismaël.

FEDALMA.

You would obey, then? part from him forever?

HINDA.

How could we live else? With our brethren lost?—
No marriage feast? The day would turn to dark.
A Zincala cannot live without her tribe.
I must obey! Poor Ismaël—poor Hinda!
But will it ever be so cold and dark?
Oh, I would sit upon the rocks and cry,

And cry so long that I could cry no more:
Then I should go to sleep.

FEDALMA.

No, Hinda, no!
Thou never shalt be called to part from him.
I will have berries for thee, red and black,
And I will be so glad to see thee glad,
That earth will seem to hold enough of joy
To outweigh all the pangs of those who part.
Be comforted, bright eyes. See, I will tie
These roses in a crown, for thee to wear.

HINDA (*clapping her hands, while FEDALMA puts the roses on her head*).

Oh, I'm as glad as many little foxes—
I will find Ismaël, and tell him all.

(*She runs off.*)

FEDALMA (*alone*).

She has the strength I lack. Within her world
The dial has not stirred since first she woke:
No changing light has made the shadows die,
And taught her trusting soul sad difference.
For her, good, right, and law are all summed up
In what is possible: life is one web
Where love, joy, kindred, and obedience
Lie fast and even, in one warp and woof
With thirst and drinking, hunger, food, and sleep.
She knows no struggles, sees no double path:
Her fate is freedom, for her will is one
With her own people's law, the only law
She ever knew. For me—I have fire within,
But on my will there falls the chilling snow
Of thoughts that come as subtly as soft flakes,
Yet press at last with hard and icy weight.
I could be firm, could give myself the wrench
And walk erect, hiding my life-long wound,
If I but saw the fruit of all my pain
With that strong vision which commands the soul,
And makes great awe the monarch of desire.
But now I totter, seeing no far goal:
I tread the rocky pass, and pause and grasp,
Guided by flashes. When my father comes,
And breathes into my soul his generous hope—
By his own greatness making life seem great,
As the clear heavens bring sublimity,
And show earth larger, spanned by that blue vast—
Resolve is strong: I can embrace my sorrow,
Nor nicely weigh the fruit; possessed with need
Solely to do the noblest, though it failed—
Though lava streamed upon my breathing deed
And buried it in night and barrenness.
But soon the glow dies out, the trumpet strain
That vibrated as strength through all my limbs
Is heard no longer; over the wide scene
There's nought but chill gray silence, or the hum
And fitful discord of a vulgar world.

Then I sink helpless—sink into the arms
 Of all sweet memories, and dream of bliss;
 See looks that penetrate like tones; hear tones
 That flash looks with them. Even now I feel
 Soft airs enwrap me, as if yearning rays
 Of some far presence touched me with their warmth
 And brought a tender murmuring . . .

[While she mused,

A figure came from out the olive-trees
 That bent close-whispering 'twixt the parted hills
 Beyond the crescent of thick cactus: paused
 At sight of her; then slowly moved
 With careful steps, and gently said, "FEDALMA!"
 Fearing lest fancy had enslaved her sense,
 She quivered, rose, but turned not. Soon again:
 "FEDALMA, it is SILVA!" Then she turned.
 He, with bared head and arms entreating, beamed
 Like morning on her. Vision held her still
 One moment, then with gliding motion swift,
 Inevitable as the melting stream's,
 She found her rest within his circling arms.]

FEDALMA.

O love, you are living, and believe in me!

DON SILVA.

Once more we are together. Wishing dies—
 Stifled with bliss.

FEDALMA.

You did not hate me, then—
 Think me an ingrate—think my love was small
 That I forsook you?

DON SILVA.

Dear, I trusted you
 As holy men trust God. You could do nought
 That was not pure and loving—though the deed
 Might pierce me unto death. You had less trust,
 Since you suspected mine. 'Twas wicked doubt.

FEDALMA.

Nay, when I saw you hating me, the fault
 Seemed in my lot—my bitter birthright—hers
 On whom you lavished all your wealth of love
 As price of nought but sorrow. Then I said,
 "'Tis better so. He will be happier!"
 But soon that thought, struggling to be a hope,
 Would end in tears.

DON SILVA.

It was a cruel thought.
 Happier! True misery is not begun
 Until I cease to love thee.

FEDALMA.

Silva!

DON SILVA.

Mine!

(They stand a moment or two in silence.)

FEDALMA.

I thought I had so much to tell you, love—
 Long eloquent stories—how it all befell—
 The solemn message, calling me away
 To awful spousals, where my own dead joy,
 A conscious ghost, looked on and saw me wed.

DON SILVA.

Oh, that grave speech would cumber our quick souls
 Like bells that waste the moments with their loudness.

FEDALMA.

And if it all were said, 'twould end in this,
 That I still loved you when I fled away.
 'Tis no more wisdom than the little birds
 Make known by their soft twitter when they feel
 Each other's heart beat.

DON SILVA.

All the deepest things
 We now say with our eyes and meeting pulse:
 Our voices need but prattle.

FEDALMA.

I forget
 All the drear days of thirst in this one draught.
(Again they are silent for a few moments.)
 But tell me how you came? Where are your guards?
 Is there no risk? And now I look at you,
 This garb is strange . . .

DON SILVA.

I came alone.

FEDALMA.

Alone?

DON SILVA.

Yes—fled in secret. There was no way else
 To find you safely.

FEDALMA *(letting one hand fall and moving a little from him with a look of sudden terror, while he clasps her more firmly by the other arm).*

Silva!

DON SILVA.

It is nought.
 Enough that I am here. Now we will cling.
 What power shall hinder us? You left me once
 To set your father free. That task is done,
 And you are mine again. I have braved all
 That I might find you, see your father, win
 His furtherance in bearing you away
 To some safe refuge. Are we not betrothed?

FEDALMA.

Oh, I am trembling 'neath the rush of thoughts
That come like griefs at morning—look at me
With awful faces, from the vanishing haze
That momentarily had hidden them.

DON SILVA.

What thoughts?

FEDALMA.

Forgotten burials. There lies a grave
Between this visionary present and the past.
Our joy is dead, and only smiles on us
A loving shade from out the place of tombs.

DON SILVA.

Your love is faint, else aught that parted us
Would seem but superstition. Love supreme
Defies dream-terrors—risks avenging fires.
I have risked all things. But your love is faint.

FEDALMA (*retreating a little, but keeping his hand*).

Silva, if now between us came a sword,
Severed my arm, and left our two hands clasped,
This poor maimed arm would feel the clasp till death.
What parts us is a sword . . .

ZARCA *has been advancing in the background. He has drawn his sword and now thrusts the naked blade between them. DON SILVA lets go FEDALMA'S hand, and grasps his sword. FEDALMA, startled at first, stands firmly, as if prepared to interpose between her father and the Duke.*

ZARCA.

Ay, 'tis a sword
That parts the Spaniard and the Zíncala:
A sword that was baptized in Christian blood,
When once a band, cloaking with Spanish law
Their brutal rapine, would have butchered us,
And outraged then our women.

(*Resting the point of his sword on the ground.*)

My lord Duke,

I was a guest within your fortress once
Against my will; had entertainment too—
Much like a galley-slave's. Pray, have you sought
The Zíncalo's camp, to find a fit return
For that Castilian courtesy? or rather
To make amends for all our prisoned toil
By free bestowal of your presence here?

DON SILVA.

Chief, I have brought no scorn to meet your scorn.
I came because love urged me—that deep love
I bear to her whom you call daughter—her
Whom I reclaim as my betrothed bride.

ZARCA.

Doubtless you bring for final argument
Your men-at-arms who will escort your bride?

DON SILVA.

I came alone. The only force I bring
Is tenderness. Nay, I will trust besides
In all the pleadings of a father's care
To wed his daughter as her nurture bids.
And for your tribe—whatever purposed good
Your thoughts may cherish, I will make secure
With the strong surety of a noble's power:
My wealth shall be your treasury.

ZARCA (*with irony*).

My thanks!

To me you offer liberal price; for her
Your love's beseeching will be force supreme.
She will go with you as a willing slave,
Will give a word of parting to her father,
Wave farewells to her tribe, then turn and say,
"Now, my lord, I am nothing but your bride;
I am quite culled, have neither root nor trunk,
Now wear me with your plume!"

DON SILVA.

Yours is the wrong

Feigning in me one thought of her below
The highest homage. I would make my rank
The pedestal of her worth; a noble's sword,
A noble's honor, her defence; his love
The life-long sanctuary of her womanhood.

ZARCA.

I tell you, were you King of Aragon,
And won my daughter's hand, your higher rank
Would blacken her dishonor. 'Twere excuse
If you were beggared, homeless, spit upon,
And so made even with her people's lot;
For then she would be lured by want, not wealth,
To be a wife amongst an alien race
To whom her tribe owes curses.

DON SILVA.

Such blind hate

Is fit for beasts of prey, but not for men.
My hostile acts against you, should but count
As ignorant strokes against a friend unknown;
And for the wrongs inflicted on your tribe
By Spanish edicts or the cruelty
Of Spanish vassals, am I criminal?
Love comes to cancel all ancestral hate,
Subdues all heritage, proves that in mankind
Union is deeper than division.

ZARCA.

Ay,

Such love is common: I have seen it oft—
Seen many women rend the sacred ties
That bind them in high fellowship with men.

Making them mothers of a people's virtue:
 Seen them so levelled to a handsome steed
 That yesterday was Moorish property,
 To-day is Christian—wears new-fashioned gear,
 Neighs to new feeders, and will prance alike
 Under all banners, so the banner be
 A master's who caresses. Such light change
 You call conversion; but we Zíncali call
 Conversion infamy. Our people's faith
 Is faithfulness; not the rote-learned belief
 That we are heaven's highest favorites,
 But the resolve that being most forsaken
 Among the sons of men, we will be true
 Each to the other, and our common lot.
 You Christians burn men for their heresy:
 Our vilest heretic is that Zíncala
 Who, choosing ease, forsakes her people's woes
 The dowry of my daughter is to be
 Chief woman of her tribe, and rescue it.
 A bride with such a dowry has no match
 Among the subjects of that Catholic Queen
 Who would have Gypsies swept into the sea
 Or else would have them gibbeted.

DON SILVA.

And you,
 Fedalma's father—you who claim the dues
 Of fatherhood—will offer up her youth
 To mere grim idols of your phantasy!
 Worse than all Pagans, with no oracle
 To bid you murder, no sure good to win,
 Will sacrifice your daughter—to no god,
 But to a ravenous fire within your soul,
 Mad hopes, blind hate, that like possessing fiends
 Shriek at a name! This sweetest virgin, reared
 As garden flowers, to give the sordid world
 Glimpses of perfectness, you snatch and thrust
 On dreary wilds; in visions mad, proclaim
 Semiramis of Gypsy wanderers;
 Doom, with a broken arrow in her heart,
 To wait for death 'mid squalid savages:
 For what? You would be saviour of your tribe;
 So said Fedalma's letter; rather say,
 You have the will to save by ruling men,
 But first to rule; and with that flinty will
 You cut your way, though the first cut you give
 Gash your child's bosom.

(While DON SILVA has been speaking, with growing passion, FEDALMA has placed herself between him and her father.)

ZARCA (with calm irony).

You are loud, my lord!
 You only are the reasonable man;
 You have a heart, I none. Fedalma's good
 Is what you see, you care for; while I seek
 No good, not even my own, argued on by nought

But hellish hunger, which-must still be fed
 Though in the feeding it I suffer throes.
 Fume at your own opinion as you will:
 I speak not now to you, but to my daughter.
 If she still calls it good to mate with you,
 To be a Spanish duchess, kneel at court,
 And hope her beauty is excuse to men
 When women whisper, "A mere Zíncala!"
 If she still calls it good to take a lot
 That measures joy for her as she forgets
 Her kindred and her kindred's misery,
 Nor feels the softness of her downy couch
 Marred by remembrance that she once forsook
 The place that she was born to—let her go!
 If life for her still lies in alien love,
 That forces her to shut her soul from truth
 As men in shameful pleasures shut out day;
 And death, for her, is to do rarest deeds,
 Which, even failing, leave new faith to men,
 The faith in human hearts—then, let her go!
 She is my only offspring; in her veins
 She bears the blood her tribe has trusted in;
 Her heritage is their obedience,
 And if I died, she might still lead them forth
 To plant the race her lover now reviles
 Where they may make a nation, and may rise
 To grander manhood than his race can show;
 Then live a goddess, sanctifying oaths,
 Enforcing right, and ruling consciences,
 By law deep-graven in exalting deeds,
 Through the long ages of her people's life.
 If she can leave that lot for silken shame,
 For kisses honeyed by oblivion—
 The bliss of drunkards or the blank of fools—
 Then let her go! You Spanish Catholics,
 When you are cruel, base, and treacherous,
 For ends not pious, tender gifts to God,
 And for men's wounds offer much oil to churches:
 We have no altars for such healing gifts
 As soothe the heavens for outrage done on earth.
 We have no priesthood and no creed to teach
 That she—the Zíncala—who might save her race
 And yet abandons it, may cleanse that blot,
 And mend the curse her life has been to men,
 By saving her own soul. Her one base choice
 Is wrong unchangeable, is poison shed
 Where men must drink, shed by her poisoning will.
 Now choose, Fedalma!

[But her choice was made.
 Slowly, while yet her father spoke, she moved
 From where oblique with deprecating arms
 She stood between the two who swayed her heart:
 Slowly she moved to choose sublimer pain;
 Yearning, yet shrinking; wrought upon by awe,
 Her own brief life seeming a little isle
 Remote through visions of a wider world

With fates close-crowded; firm to slay her joy
 That cut her heart with smiles beneath the knife,
 Like a sweet babe foredoomed by prophecy.
 She stood apart, yet near her father: stood
 Hand clutching hand, her limbs all tense with will
 That strove 'gainst anguish, eyes that seemed a soul
 Yearning in death towards him she loved and left.
 He faced her, pale with passion and a will
 Fierce to resist whatever might seem strong
 And ask him to submit: he saw one end—
 He must be conqueror; monarch of his lot
 And not its tributary. But she spoke
 Tenderly, pleadingly.]

FEDALMA.

My lord, farewell!
 'Twas well we met once more; now we must part.
 I think we had the chief of all love's joys
 Only in knowing that we loved each other.

DON SILVA.

I thought we loved with love that clings till death,
 Clings as brute mothers, bleeding, to their young,
 Still sheltering, clutching it, though it were dead;
 Taking the death-wound sooner than divide.
 I thought we loved so.

FEDALMA.

Silva, it is fate.
 Great Fate has made me heiress of this woe.
 You must forgive Fedalma all her debt:
 She is quite beggared: if she gave herself,
 'Twould be a self corrupt with stifled thoughts
 Of a forsaken better. It is truth
 My father speaks: the Spanish noble's wife
 Were a false Zincala. No! I will bear
 The heavy trust of my inheritance.
 See, 'twas my people's life that throbbed in me:
 An unknown need stirred darkly in my soul,
 And made me restless even in my bliss.
 Oh, all my bliss was in our love; but now
 I may not taste it: some deep energy
 Compels me to choose hunger. Dear, farewell!
 I must go with my people.

[She stretched forth
 Her tender hands, that oft had lain in his,
 The hands he knew so well, that sight of them
 Seemed like their touch. But he stood still as death;
 Locked motionless by forces opposite:
 His frustrate hopes still battled with despair;
 His will was prisoner to the double grasp
 Of rage and hesitancy. All the way
 Behind him he had trodden confident,
 Ruling munificently in his thought
 This Gypsy father. Now the father stood
 Present and silent and unchangeable]

As a celestial portent. Backward lay
 The traversed road, the town's forsaken wall,
 The risk, the daring; all around him now
 Was obstacle, save where the rising flood
 Of love close pressed by anguish of denial
 Was sweeping him resistless; save where she,
 Gazing, stretched forth her tender hands, that hurt
 Like parting kisses. Then at last he spoke.]

DON SILVA.

No, I can never take those hands in mine
 Then let them go forever!

FEDALMA.

It must be.

We may not make this world a paradise
 By walking it together hand in hand,
 With eyes that meeting feed a double strength.
 We must be only joined by pains divine
 Of spirits blent in mutual memories.
 Silva, our joy is dead.

DON SILVA.

But love still lives,

And has a safer guard in wretchedness.
 Fedalma, women know no perfect love:
 Loving the strong, they can forsake the strong;
 Man clings because the being whom he loves
 Is weak and needs him. I can never turn
 And leave you to your difficult wandering;
 Know that you tread the desert, bear the storm,
 Shed tears, see terrors, faint with weariness,
 Yet live away from you. I should feel nought
 But your imagined pains: in my own steps
 See your feet bleeding, taste your silent tears,
 And feel no presence but your loneliness.
 No, I will never leave you!

ZARCA.

My lord Duke,

I have been patient, given room for speech,
 Bent not to move my daughter by command,
 Save that of her own faithfulness. But now,
 All further words are idle elegies
 Unfitting times of action. You are here
 With the safe-conduct of that trust you showed
 Coming unguarded to the Gypsy's camp.
 I would fain meet all trust with courtesy
 As well as honor; but my utmost power
 Is to afford you Gypsy guard to-night
 Within the tents that keep the northward lines,
 And for the morrow, escort on your way
 Back to the Moorish bounds.

DON SILVA.

What if my words

Were meant for deeds, decisive as a leap

Into the current? It is not my wont
 To utter hollow words, and speak resolves
 Like verses bandied in a madrigal.
 I spoke in action first: I faced all risks
 To find Fedalma. Action speaks again
 When I, a Spanish noble, here declare
 That I abide with her, adopt her lot,
 Claiming alone fulfilment of her vows
 As my betrothed wife.

FEDALMA (*wresting herself from him, and standing opposite with a look of terror*)

Nay, Silva, nay!

You could not live so—spring from your high place . . .

DON SILVA.

Yes, I have said it. And you, chief, are bound
 By her strict vows, no stronger fealty
 Being left to cancel them.

ZARCA.

Strong words, my lord!

Sounds fatal as the hammer-strokes that shape
 The glowing metal: they must shape your life.
 That you will claim my daughter is to say
 That you will leave your Spanish dignities,
 Your home, your wealth, your people, to become
 Wholly a Zincalo: share our wanderings,
 And be a match meet for my daughter's dower
 By living for her tribe; take the deep oath
 That binds you to us; rest within our camp,
 Never more hold command of Spanish men,
 And keep my orders. See, my lord, you lock
 A many-winding chain—a heavy chain.

DON SILVA.

I have but one resolve: let the rest follow.
 What is my rank? To-morrow it will be filled
 By one who eyes it like a carrion bird,
 Waiting for death. I shall be no more missed
 Than waves are missed that, leaping on the rock,
 Find there a bed and rest. Life's a vast sea
 That does its mighty errand without fail,
 Panting in unchanged strength though waves are changing.
 And I have said it: she shall be my people,
 And where she gives her life I will give mine.
 She shall not live alone, nor die alone.
 I will elect my deeds, and be the liege
 Not of my birth, but of that good alone
 I have discerned and chosen.

ZARCA.

Our poor faith

Allows not rightful choice, save of the right
 Our birth has made for us. And you, my lord,
 Can still defer your choice, for some days' space.
 I march perforce to-night; you, if you will,
 Under a Gypsy guard, can keep the heights

With silent Time that slowly opes the scroll
Of change inevitable—take no oath
Till my accomplished task leave me at large
To see you keep your purpose or renounce it.

DON SILVA.

Chief, do I hear amiss, or does your speech
Ring with a doubleness which I had held
Most alien to you? You would put me off,
And cloak evasion with allowance? No!
We will complete our pledges. I will take
That oath which binds not me alone, but you,
To join my life forever with Fedalma's.

ZAROA.

I wrangle not—time presses. But the oath
Will leave you that same post upon the heights;
Pledged to remain there while my absence lasts.
You are agreed, my lord?

DON SILVA.

Agreed to all.

ZAROA.

Then I will give the summons to our camp.
We will adopt you as a brother now,
After our wonted fashion.

[Exit ZAROA.

(SILVA takes FEDALMA'S hands.)

FEDALMA.

O my lord!

I think the earth is trembling: nought is firm.
Some terror chills me with a shadowy grasp.
Am I about to wake, or do you breathe
Here in this valley? Did the outer air
Vibrate to fatal words, or did they shake
Only my dreaming soul? You—join—our tribe?

DON SILVA.

Is then your love too faint to raise belief
Up to that height?

FEDALMA.

Silva, had you but said
That you would die—that were an easy task
For you who oft have fronted death in war.
But so to live for me—you, used to rule—
You could not breathe the air my father breathes:
His presence is subjection. Go, my lord!
Fly, while there yet is time. Wait not to speak.
I will declare that I refused your love—
Would keep no vows to you. . . .

DON SILVA.

It is too late.

You shall not thrust me back to seek a good
Apart from you. And what good? Why, to face

Your absence—all the want that drove me forth—
 To work the will of a more tyrannous friend
 Than any uncowed father. Life at least
 Gives choice of ills ; forces me to defy,
 But shall not force me to a weak defiance.
 The power that threatened you, to master me,
 That scorches like a cave-hid dragon's breath,
 Sure of its victory in spite of hate,
 Is what I last will bend to—most defy.
 Your father has a chieftain's ends, befitting
 A soldier's eye and arm: were he as strong
 As the Moors' prophet, yet the prophet too
 Had younger captains of illustrious fame
 Among the infidels. Let him command,
 For when your father speaks, I shall hear you.
 Life were no gain if you were lost to me:
 I would straight go and seek the Moorish walls,
 Challenge their bravest, and embrace swift death.
 The Glorious Mother and her pitying Son
 Are not Inquisitors, else their heaven were hell.
 Perhaps they hate their cruel worshippers,
 And let them feed on lies. I'll rather trust
 They love you and have sent me to defend you.

FEDALMA.

I made my creed so, just to suit my mood
 And smooth all hardship, till my father came
 And taught my soul by ruling it. Since then
 I cannot weave a dreaming happy creed
 Where our love's happiness is not accursed.
 My father shook my soul awake. And you—
 The bonds Fedalma may not break for you,
 I cannot joy that you should break for her.

DON SILVA.

Oh, Spanish men are not a petty band
 Where one deserter makes a fatal breach.
 Men, even nobles, are more plenteous
 Than steeds and armor ; and my weapons left
 Will find new hands to wield them. Arrogance
 Makes itself champion of mankind, and holds
 God's purpose maimed for one hidalgo lost.
 See where your father comes and brings a crowd
 Of witnesses to hear my oath of love ;
 The low red sun glows on them like a fire.
 This seems a valley in some strange new world,
 Where we have found each other, my Fedalma.

BOOK IV.

Now twice the day had sunk from off the hills
 While Silva kept his watch there, with the band
 Of stalwart Gypsies. When the sun was high

He slept; then, waking, strained impatient eyes
 To catch the promise of some moving form
 That might be Juan—Juan who went and came
 To soothe two hearts, and claimed nought for his own:
 Friend more divine than all divinities,
 Quenching his human thirst in others' joy.
 All through the lingering nights and pale chill dawns
 Juan had hovered near; with delicate sense,
 As of some breath from every changing mood,
 Had spoken or kept silence: touched his lute
 To hint of melody, or poured brief strains
 That seemed to make all sorrows natural,
 Hardly worth weeping for, since life was short,
 And shared by loving souls. Such pity welled
 Within the minstrel's heart of light-tongued Juan
 For this doomed man, who with dream-shrouded eyes
 Had stepped into a torrent as a brook,
 Thinking to ford it and return at will,
 And now waked helpless in the eddying flood,
 Hemmed by its raging hurry. Once that thought,
 How easy wandering is, how hard and strict
 The homeward way, had slipped from reverie
 Into low-murmured song;—(brief Spanish song
 'Scaped him as sighs escape from other men).

*Push off the boat,
 Quit, quit the shore,
 The stars will guide us back:—
 O gathering cloud,
 O wide, wide sea,
 O waves that keep no track!*

*On through the pines!
 The pillared woods,
 Where silence breathes sweet breath:—
 O labyrinth,
 O sunless gloom,
 The other side of death!*

Such plaintive song had seemed to please the Duke—
 Had seemed to melt all voices of reproach
 To sympathetic sadness; but his moods
 Had grown more fitful with the growing hours.
 And this soft murmur had the iterant voice
 Of heartless Echo, whom no pain can move
 To say aught else than we have said to her.
 He spoke, impatient: "Juan, cease thy song.
 Our whimpering poesy and small-paced tunes
 Have no more utterance than the cricket's chirp
 For souls that carry heaven and hell within."
 Then Juan, lightly: "True, my lord, I chirp
 For lack of soul; some hungry poets chirp
 For lack of bread. 'Twere wiser to sit down
 And count the star-seed, till I fell asleep
 With the cheap wine of pure stupidity."
 And Silva, checked by courtesy; "Nay, Juan,
 Were speech once good, thy song were best of speech.
 I meant, all life is but poor mockery:

Action, place, power, the visible wide world
 Are tattered masquerading of this self,
 This pulse of conscious mystery: all change,
 Whether to high or low, is change of rags.
 But for her love, I would not take a good
 Save to burn out in battle, in a flame
 Of madness that would feel no mangled limbs,
 And die not knowing death, but passing straight
 —Well, well, to other flames—in purgatory.”
 Keen Juan’s ear caught the self-discontent
 That vibrated beneath the changing tones
 Of life-contemning scorn. Gently he said:
 “But *with* her love, my lord, the world deserves
 A higher rate; were it but masquerade,
 The rags were surely worth the wearing?” “Yes.
 No misery shall force me to repent
 That I have loved her.”

So with wilful talk,
 Fencing the wounded soul from beating winds
 Of truth that came unasked, companionship
 Made the hours lighter. And the Gypsy guard,
 Trusting familiar Juan, were content,
 At friendly hint from him, to still their songs
 And busy jargon round the nightly fires.
 Such sounds, the quick-conceiving poet knew
 Would strike on Silva’s agitated soul
 Like mocking repetition of the oath
 That bound him in strange clanship with the tribe
 Of human panthers, flame-eyed, lithe-limbed, fierce,
 Unrecking of time-woven subtleties
 And high tribunals of a phantom-world.

But the third day, though Silva southward gazed
 Till all the shadows slanted towards him, gazed
 Till all the shadows died, no Juan came.
 Now in his stead came loneliness, and Thought
 Inexorable, fastening with firm chain
 What is to what hath been. Now awful Night,
 The prime ancestral mystery, came down
 Past all the generations of the stars,
 And visited his soul with touch more close
 Than when he kept that younger, briefer watch
 Under the church’s roof beside his arms,
 And won his knighthood.

Well, this solitude,
 This company with the enduring universe,
 Whose mighty silence carrying all the past
 Absorbs our history as with a breath,
 Should give him more assurance, make him strong
 In all contempt of that poor circumstance
 Called human life—customs and bonds and laws
 Wherewith men make a better or a worse,
 Like children playing on a barren mound
 Feigning a thing to strive for or avoid.
 Thus Silva argued with his many-voiced self,
 Whose thwarted needs, like angry multitudes,
 Lured from the home that nurtured them to strength,

Made loud insurgence. Thus he called on Thought,
 On dexterous Thought, with its swift alchemy
 To change all forms, dissolve all prejudice
 Of man's long heritage, and yield him up
 A crude fused world to fashion as he would.
 Thought played him double; seemed to wear the yoke
 Of sovereign passion in the noon-day height
 Of passion's prevalence; but served anon
 As tribune to the larger soul which brought
 Loud-mingled cries from every human need
 That ages had instructed into life.
 He could not grasp Night's black blank mystery
 And wear it for a spiritual garb
 Creed-proof; he shuddered at its passionless touch.
 On solitary souls, the universe
 Looks down inhospitable; the human heart
 Finds nowhere shelter but in human kind.
 He yearned towards images that had breath in them,
 That sprang warm palpitant with memories
 From streets and altars, from ancestral homes
 Banners and trophies and the cherishing rays
 Of shame and honor in the eyes of man.
 These made the speech articulate of his soul,
 That could not move to utterance of scorn
 Save in words bred by fellowship; could not feel
 Resolve of hardest constancy to love
 The firmer for the sorrows of the loved,
 Save by concurrent energies high-wrought
 To sensibilities transcending sense
 Through close community, and long-shared pains
 Of far-off generations. All in vain
 He sought the outlaw's strength, and made a right
 Contemning that hereditary right
 Which held dim habitations in his frame,
 Mysterious haunts of echoes old and far,
 The voice divine of human loyalty.
 At home, among his people, he had played
 In sceptic ease with saints and litanies,
 And thunders of the Church that deadened fell
 Through screens of priests plethoric. Awe, unscathed
 By deeper trespass, slept without a dream.
 But for such trespass as made outcasts, still
 The ancient Furies lived with faces new
 And lurked with lighter slumber than of old
 O'er Catholic Spain, the land of sacred oaths
 That might be broken.

Now the former life
 Of close-linked fellowship, the life that made
 His full-formed self, as the impregnate sap
 Of years successive frames the full-branched tree—
 Was present in one whole; and that great trust
 His deed had broken turned reproach on him
 From faces of all witnesses who heard
 His uttered pledges; saw him hold high place
 Centring reliance; use rich privilege
 That bound him like a victim-nourished god
 By tacit covenant to shield and bless;

Assume the Cross and take his knightly oath
 Mature, deliberate: faces human all,
 And some divine as well as human: His
 Who hung supreme, the suffering Man divine
 Above the altar; Hers, the Mother pure
 Whose glance informed his masculine tenderness
 With deepest reverence; the Archangel armed,
 Trampling man's enemy: all heroic forms
 That fill the world of faith with voices, hearts,
 And high companionship, to Silva now
 Made but one inward and insistent world
 With faces of his peers, with court and hall
 And deference, and reverent vassalage,
 And filial pieties—one current strong,
 The warmly mingled life-blood of his mind,
 Sustaining him even when he idly played
 With rules, beliefs, charges, and ceremonies
 As arbitrary fooling. Such revenge
 Is wrought by the long travail of mankind
 On him who scorns it, and would shape his life
 Without obedience.

But his warrior's pride
 Would take no wounds save on the breast. He faces
 The fatal crowd: "I never shall repent!
 If I have sinned, my sin was made for me
 By men's perverseness. There's no blameless life
 Save for the passionless, no sanctities
 But have the self-same roof and props with crime,
 Or have their roots close interlaced with wrong.
 If I had loved her less, been more a craven,
 I had kept my place and won the easy praise
 Of a true Spanish noble. But I loved,
 And, loving, dared—not Death the warrior
 But Infamy that binds and strips, and holds
 The brand and lash. I have dared all for her.
 She was my good—what other men call heaven,
 And for the sake of it bear penances;
 Nay, some of old were baited, tortured, flayed
 To win their heaven. Heaven was their good,
 She, mine. And I have braved for her all fires
 Certain or threatened; for I go away
 Beyond the reach of expiation—far away
 From sacramental blessing. Does God bless
 No outlaw? Shut his absolution fast
 In human breath? Is there no God for me
 Save him whose cross I have forsaken?—Well,
 I am forever exiled—but with her!
 She is dragged out into the wilderness;
 I, with my love, will be her providence.
 I have a right to choose my good or ill,
 A right to damn myself! The ill is mine.
 I never will repent!" . . .
 Thus Silva, inwardly debating, all his ear
 Turned into audience of a twofold mind;
 For even in tumult full-fraught consciousness
 Had plenteous being for a self aloof
 That gazed and listened, like a soul in dreams

Weaving the wondrous tale it marvels at.
 But oft the conflict slackened, oft strong Love
 With tidal energy returning laid
 All other restlessness: Fedalma came,
 And with her visionary presence brought
 What seemed a waking in the warm spring morn.
 He still was pacing on the stony earth
 Under the deepening night; the fresh-lit fires
 Were flickering on dark forms and eyes that met
 His forward and his backward tread; but she,
 She was within him, making his whole self
 Mere correspondence with her image: sense,
 In all its deep recesses where it keeps
 The mystic stores of ecstasy, was turned
 To memory that killed the hour, like wine.
 Then Silva said, "She, by herself, is life.
 What was my joy before I loved her—what
 Shall heaven lure us with, love being lost?"—
 For he was young.

But now around the fires
 The Gypsy band felt freer; Juan's song
 Was no more there, nor Juan's friendly ways
 For links of amity 'twixt their wild mood
 And this strange brother, this pale Spanish duke,
 Who with their Gypsy badge upon his breast
 Took readier place within their alien hearts
 As a marked captive, who would fain escape.
 And Nadar, who commanded them, had known
 The prison in Bedmár. So now, in talk
 Foreign to Spanish ears, they said their minds,
 Discussed their chief's intent, the lot marked out
 For this new brother. Would he wed their queen?
 And some denied, saying their queen would wed
 Only a Gypsy duke—one who would join
 Their bands in Telemsán. But others thought
 Young Hassan was to wed her; said their chief
 Would never trust this noble of Castile,
 Who in his very swearing was forsworn.
 And then one fell to chanting, in wild notes
 Recurrent like the moan of outshut winds,
 The adjuration they were wont to use
 To any Spaniard who would join their tribe:
 Words of plain Spanish, lately stirred anew
 And ready at new impulse. Soon the rest,
 Drawn to the stream of sound, made unison
 Higher and lower, till the tidal sweep
 Seemed to assail the Duke and close him round
 With force dæmonic. All debate till now
 Had wrestled with the urgency of that oath
 Already broken; now the newer oath
 Thrust its loud presence on him. He stood still,
 Close baited by loud-barking thoughts—fierce hounds
 Of that Supreme, the irreversible Past.

The ZINGALI sing.

*Brother, hear and take the curse,
 Curse of soul's and body's throes,*

*If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn false Zíncalo !*

*May you be accurst
By hunger and by thirst
By spiked pangs,
Starvation's fangs
Clutching you alone
When none but peering vultures hear your moan,
Curst by burning hands,
Curst by aching brow,
When on sea-wide sands
Fever lays you low;
By the maddened brain
When the running water glistens,
And the deaf ear listens, listens,
Prisoned fire within the vein,
On the tongue and on the lip,
Not a sip
From the earth or skies;
Hot the desert lies
Pressed into your anguish,
Narrowing earth and narrowing sky
Into lonely misery.
Lonely may you languish
Through the day and through the night,
Hate the darkness, hate the light,
Pray and find no ear,
Feel no brother near,
Till on death you cry,
Death who passes by,
And anew you groan,
Scaring the vultures all to leave you living lone.
Curst by soul's and body's throes
If you love the dark men's foes,
Cling not fast to all the dark men's woes,
Turn false Zíncalo !
Swear to hate the cruel cross,
The silver cross !
Glittering, laughing at the blood
Shed below it in a flood
When it glitters over Moorish porches;
Laughing at the scent of flesh
When it glitters where the fagot scorches.
Burning life's mysterious mesh;
Blood of wandering Israël,
Blood of wandering Ismaël,
Blood, the drink of Christian scorn,
Blood of wanderers, sons of morn
Where the life of men began:
Swear to hate the cross !—
Sign of all the wanderers' foes,
Sign of all the wanderers' woes—
Else its curse light on you !
Else the curse upon you light
Of its sharp, red-sworded might.*

May it lie a blood-red blight
On all things within your sight:
On the white haze of the morn,
On the meadows and the corn,
On the sun and on the moon,
On the clearness of the noon,
On the darkness of the night.
May it fill your aching sight—
Red-cross sword and sword blood-red—
Till it press upon your head,
Till it lie within your brain,
Piercing sharp, a cross of pain,
Till it lie upon your heart,
Burning hot, a cross of fire,
Till from sense in every part
Pains have clustered like a stinging swarm
In the cross's form,
And you see nought but the cross of blood,
And you feel nought but the cross of fire:
Curst by all the cross's throes
If you hate not all our foes,
Cling not fast to all our woes,
Turn false Zíncalo!

A fierce delight was in the Gypsies' chant;
 They thought no more of Silva, only felt
 Like those broad-chested rovers of the night
 Who pour exuberant strength upon the air.
 To him it seemed as if the hellish rhythm,
 Revolving in long curves that slackened now,
 Now hurried, sweeping round again to slackness,
 Would cease no more. What use to raise his voice,
 Or grasp his weapon? He was powerless now,
 With these new comrades of his future—he
 Who had been wont to have his wishes feared
 And guessed at as a hidden law for men.
 Even the passive silence of the night
 That left these howlers mastery, even the moon,
 Rising and staring with a helpless face
 Angered him. He was ready now to fly
 At some loud throat, and give the signal so
 For batchery of himself.

But suddenly
 The sounds that travelled towards no foreseen close
 Were torn right off and fringed into the night;
 Sharp Gypsy ears had caught the onward strain
 Of kindred voices joining in the chant.
 All started to their feet and mustered close,
 Auguring long-awaited summons. It was come:
 The summons to set forth and join their chief.
 Fedalma had been called, and she was gone
 Under safe escort, Juan following her:
 The camp—the women, children, and old men—
 Were moving slowly southward on the way
 To Almería. Silva learned no more.
 He marched perforce; what other goal was his
 Than where Fedalma was? And so he marched

Through the dim passes and o'er rising hills,
Not knowing whither, till the morning came.

The Moorish hall in the castle at Bedmár. The morning twilight dimly shows stains of blood on the white marble floor; yet there has been a careful restoration of order among the spare objects of furniture. Stretched on mats lie three corpses, the faces bare, the bodies covered with mantles. A little way off, with rolled matting for a pillow, lies ZARCA, sleeping. His chest and arms are bare; his weapons, turban, mail-shirt, and other upper garments lie on the floor beside him. In the outer gallery Zincali are pacing, at intervals, past the arched openings.

ZARCA (half rising and resting his elbow on the pillow while he looks round).

The morning! I have slept for full three hours;
Slept without dreams, save of my daughter's face.
Its sadness waked me. Soon she will be here,
Soon must outlive the worst of all the pains
Bred by false nurture in an alien home—
As if a lion in fangless infancy
Learned love of creatures that with fatal growth
It scents as natural prey, and grasps and tears,
Yet with heart-hunger yearns for, missing them.
She is a lioness. And they—the race
That robbed me of her—reared her to this pain.
He will be crushed and torn. There was no help.
But she, my child, will bear it. For strong souls
Live like fire-hearted suns to spend their strength
In farthest striving action; breathe more free
In mighty anguish than in trivial ease.
Her sad face waked me. I shall meet it soon
Waking . . .

(He rises and stands looking at the corpses.)

As now I look on these pale dead,
These blossoming branches crushed beneath the fall
Of that broad trunk to which I laid my axe
With fullest foresight, so will I ever face
In thought beforehand to its utmost reach
The consequences of my conscious deeds;
So face them after, bring them to my bed,
And never drug my soul to sleep with lies.
If they are cruel, they shall be arraigned
By that true name; they shall be justified
By my high purpose, by the clear-seen good
That grew into my vision as I grew,
And makes my nature's function, the full pulse
Of inbred kingship. Catholics,
Arabs, and Hebrews, have their god apiece
To fight and conquer for them, or be bruised,
Like Allah now, yet keep avenging stores
Of patient wrath. The Zincali have no god
Who speaks to them and calls them his, unless
I, Zarca, carry living in my frame
The power divine that chooses them and saves.
"Life and more life unto the chosen, death
To all things living that would stifle them!"

So speaks each god that makes a nation strong;
 Burns trees and krutes and slays all hindering men.
 The Spaniards boast their god the strongest now:
 They win most towns by treachery, make most slaves,
 Burn the most vines and men, and rob the most.
 I fight against that strength, and in my turn
 Slay these brave young who duteously strove.
 Cruel? ay, it is cruel. But, how else?
 To save, we kill; each blow we strike at guilt
 Hurts innocence with its shock. Men might well seek
 For purifying rites; even pious deeds
 Need washing. But my cleansing waters flow
 Solely from my intent.

(He turns away from the bodies to where his garments lie, but does not lift them.)

And she must suffer!

But she has seen the unchangeable and bowed
 Her head beneath the yoke. And she will walk
 No more in chilling twilight, for to-day
 Rises our sun. The difficult night is past;
 We keep the bridge no more, but cross it; march
 Forth to a land where all our wars shall be
 With greedy obstinate plants that will not yield
 Fruit for their nurture. All our race shall come
 From north, west, east, a kindred multitude,
 And make large fellowship, and raised inspired
 The shout divine, the unison of resolve.
 So I, so she, will see our race redeemed.
 And their keen love of family and tribe
 Shall no more thrive on cunning, hide and lurk
 In petty arts of abject, hunted life,
 But grow heroic in the sanctioning light,
 And feed with ardent blood a nation's heart.
 That is my work: and it is well begun.
 On to achievement!

(He takes up the mail-shirt, and looks at it, then throws it down again.)

No, I'll none of you!

To-day there'll be no fighting. A few hours,
 And I shall doff these garments of the Moor;
 Till then I will walk lightly and breathe high.

SEPHARDO *(appearing at the archway leading into the outer gallery).*

You bade me wake you. . . .

ZABOA.

Welcome, Doctor; see,

With that small task I did but beckon you
 To graver work. You know these corpses?

SEPHARDO.

Yes.

I would they were not corpses. Storms will lay
 The fairest trees and leave the withered stumps.
 This Alvar and the Duke were of one age,
 And very loving friends. I minded not
 The sight of Don Diego's corpse, for death
 Gave him some gentleness, and had he lived
 I had still hated him. But this young Alvar

Was doubly noble, as a gem that holds
Rare virtues in its lustre; and his death
Will pierce Don Silva with a poisoned dart.
This fair and curly youth was Arias,
A son of the Pachecos; this dark face. . . .

ZARCA.

Enough! you know their names. I had divined
That they were near the Duke, most like had served
My daughter, were her friends; so rescued them
From being flung upon the heap of slain.
Beseech you, Doctor, if you owe me aught
As having served your people, take the pains
To see these bodies buried decently.
And let their names be writ above their graves,
As those of brave young Spaniards who died well.
I needs must bear this womanhood in my heart—
Bearing my daughter there. For once she prayed—
'Twas at our parting—"When you see fair hair
Be pitiful." And I am forced to look
On fair heads living and be pitiless.
Your service, Doctor, will be done to her.

SEPHARDO.

A service doubly dear. For these young dead,
And one less happy Spaniard who still lives,
Are offerings which I wrenched from out my heart,
Constrained by cries of Israel: while my hands
Rendered the victims at command, my eyes
Closed themselves vainly, as if vision lay
Through those poor loopholes only. I will go
And see the graves dug by some cypresses.

ZARCA.

Meanwhile the bodies shall rest here. Farewell.

(Exit SEPHARDO.)

Nay, 'tis no mockery. She keeps me so
From hardening with the hardness of my acts.
This Spaniard shrouded in her love—I would
He lay here too that I might pity him.

Morning.—The Plaga Santiago in Bedmár. A crowd of townsmen forming an outer circle: within, Zíncali and Moorish soldiers drawn up round the central space. On the higher ground in front of the church a stake with fagots heaped, and at a little distance a gibbet. Moorish music. ZARCA enters, wearing his gold necklace with the Gypsy badge of the flaming torch over the dress of a Moorish Captain, accompanied by a small band of armed Zíncali, who fall aside and range themselves with the other soldiers while he takes his stand in front of the stake and gibbet. The music ceases, and there is expectant silence.

ZARCA.

Men of Bedmár, well-wishers, and allies,
Whether of Moorish or of Hebrew blood,
Who, being galled by the hard Spaniard's yoke,
Have welcomed our quick conquest as release,
I, Zarca, chief of Spanish Gypsies hold
By delegation of the Moorish King

Supreme command within this town and fort.
 Nor will I, with false show of modesty,
 Profess myself unworthy of this post,
 For so I should but tax the giver's choice.
 And, as ye know, while I was prisoner here,
 Forging the bullets meant for Moorish hearts,
 But likely now to reach another mark,
 I learned the secrets of the town's defence,
 Caught the loud whispers of your discontent,
 And so could serve the purpose of the Moor
 As the edge's keenness serves the weapon's weight.
 My Zíncali, lynx-eyed and lithe of limb,
 Tracked out the high Sierra's path,
 Guided the hard ascent, and were the first
 To scale the walls and brave the showering stones.
 In brief, I reached this rank through service done
 By thought of mine and valor of my tribe,
 Yet hold it but in trust, with readiness
 To lay it down; for we—the Zíncali—
 Will never pitch our tents again on land
 The Spaniard grudges us: we seek a home
 Where we may spread and ripen like the corn
 By blessing of the sun and spacious earth.
 Ye wish us well, I think, and are our friends?

CROWD.

Long life to Zarca and his Zíncali!

ZARCA.

Now, for the cause of our assembling here.
 'Twas my command that rescued from your hands
 That Spanish Prior and Inquisitor
 Whom in fierce retribution you had bound
 And meant to burn, tied to a planted cross.
 I rescued him with promise that his death
 Should be more signal in its justice—made
 Public in fullest sense, and orderly.
 Here, then, you see the stake—slow death by fire;
 And there a gibbet—swift death by the cord.
 Now hear me, Moors and Hebrews of Bedmár,
 Our kindred by the warmth of Eastern blood!
 Punishing cruel wrong by cruelty
 We copy Christian crime. Vengeance is just:
 Justly we rid the earth of human fiends
 Who carry hell for pattern in their souls.
 But in high vengeance there is noble scorn:
 It tortures not the torturer, nor gives
 Iniquitous payment for iniquity.
 The great avenging angel does not crawl
 To kill the serpent with a mimic fang;
 He stands erect, with sword of keenest edge
 That slays like lightning. So too we will slay
 The cruel man; slay him because he works
 Woe to mankind. And I have given command
 To pile these fagots, not to burn quick flesh,
 But for a sign of that dire wrong to men
 Which arms our wrath with justice. While, to show

This Christian worshipper that we obey
 A better law than his, he shall be led
 Straight to the gibbet and to swiftest death.
 For I, the chieftain of the Gypsies, will
 My people shed no blood but what is shed
 In heat of battle or in judgment strict
 With calm deliberation on the right.
 Such is my will, and if it please you—well.

CROWD.

It pleases us. Long life to Zarca!

ZARCA.

Hark!

The bell is striking, and they bring even now
 The prisoner from the fort. What, Nadar?

NADAR (*has appeared, cutting the crowd, and advancing towards ZARCA till he is near enough to speak in an undertone.*)

Chief,

I have obeyed your word, have followed it
 As water does the furrow in the rock.

ZARCA.

Your band is here?

NADAR.

Yes, and the Spaniard too

ZARCA.

'Twas so I ordered.

NADAR.

Ay, but this sleek hound,
 Who slipped his collar off to join the wolves,
 Has still a heart for none but kennelled brutes.
 He rages at the taking of the town,
 Says all his friends are butchered; and one corpse
 He stumbled on—well, I would sooner be
 A murdered Gypsy's dog, and howl for him,
 Than be this Spaniard. Rage has made him whiter.
 One townsman taunted him with his escape,
 And thanked him for so favoring us. . . .

ZARCA.

Enough.

You gave him my command that he should wait
 Within the castle, till I saw him?

NADAR.

Yes.

But he defied me, broke away, ran loose
 I know not whither; he may soon be here.
 I came to warn you, lest he work us harm.

ZARCA.

Fear not, I know the road I travel by:
 Its turns are no surprises. He who rules
 Must humor full as much as he commands;
 Must let men vow impossibilities;
 Grant folly's prayers that hinder folly's wish
 And serve the ends of wisdom. Ah, he comes!

[Sweeping like some pale herald from the dead,

Whose shadow-nurtured eyes, dazed by full light,
 See nought without, but give reverted sense
 To the soul's imagery, Silva came,
 The wondering people parting wide to get
 Continuous sight of him as he passed on—
 This high hidalgo, who through blooming years
 Had shone on men with planetary calm,
 Believed in with all sacred images
 And saints that must be taken as they were,
 Though rendering meagre service for men's praise:
 Bareheaded now, carrying an unsheathed sword,
 And on his breast, where late he bore the cross,
 Wearing the Gypsy badge; his form aslant,
 Driven, it seemed, by some invisible chase,
 Right to the front of Zarca. There he paused.]

DON SILVA.

Chief, you are treacherous, cruel, devilish!
 Relentless as a curse that once let loose
 From lips of wrath, lives bodiless to destroy,
 And darkly traps a man in nets of guilt
 Which could not weave themselves in open day
 Before his eyes. Oh, it was bitter wrong
 To hold this knowledge locked within your mind,
 To stand with waking eyes in broadest light,
 And see me, dreaming, shed my kindred's blood.
 'Tis horrible that men with hearts and hands
 Should smile in silence like the firmament
 And see a fellow-mortal draw a lot
 On which themselves have written agony!
 Such injury has no redress, no healing
 Save what may lie in stemming further ill.
 Poor balm for maiming! Yet I come to claim it.

ZARCA.

First prove your wrongs, and I will hear your claim.
 Mind, you are not commander of Bedmár,
 Nor duke, nor knight, nor anything for me,
 Save a sworn Gypsy, subject with my tribe,
 Over whose deeds my will is absolute.
 You chose that lot, and would have railed at me
 Had I refused it you: I warned you first
 What oaths you had to take . . .

DON SILVA.

You never warned me

That you had linked yourself with Moorish men
 To take this town and fortress of Bedmár—
 Slay my near kinsman, him who held my place,
 Our house's heir and guardian—slay my friend,
 My chosen brother—desecrate the church
 Where once my mother held me in her arms,
 Making the holy chrism holier
 With tears of joy that fell upon my brow!
 You never warned . . .

ZARCA.

I warned you of your oath,
 You shrank not, were resolved, were sure your place

Would never miss you, and you had your will.
I am no priest, and keep no consciences:
I keep my own place and my own command.

DON SILVA.

I said my place would never miss me—yes!
A thousand Spaniards died on that same day
And were not missed; their garments clothed the backs
That else were bare . . .

ZARCA.

But you were just the one
Above the thousand, had you known the die
That fate was throwing then.

DON SILVA.

You knew it—you!
With fiendish knowledge, smiling at the end.
You knew what snares had made my flying steps
Murderous; you let me lock my soul with oaths
Which your acts made a hellish sacrament.
I say, you knew this as a fiend would know it,
And let me damn myself.

ZARCA.

The deed was done
Before you took your oath, or reached our camp,—
Done when you slipped in secret from the post
'Twas yours to keep, and not to meditate
If others might not fill it. For your oath,
What man is he who brandishes a sword
In darkness, kills his friends, and rages then
Against the night that kept him ignorant?
Should I, for one unstable Spaniard, quit
My steadfast ends as father and as chief;
Renounce my daughter and my people's hope,
Lest a deserter should be made ashamed?

DON SILVA.

Your daughter—O great God! I vent but madness.
The past will never change. I come to stem
Harm that may yet be hindered. Chief—this stake—
Tell me who is to die! Are you not bound
Yourself to him you took in fellowship?
The town is yours; let me but save the blood
That still is warm in men who were my . . .

ZARCA.

Peace!

They bring the prisoner.

[Zarca waved his arm
With head averse, in peremptory sign
That 'twixt them now there should be space and silence.
Most eyes had turned to where the prisoner
Advanced among his guards; and Silva too
Turned eagerly, all other striving quelled
By striving with the dread lest he should see
His thought outside him. And he saw it there.

The prisoner was Father Isidor:
 The man whom once he fiercely had accused
 As author of his misdeeds—whose designs
 Had forced him into fatal secrecy.
 The imperious and inexorable Will
 Was yoked, and he who had been pitiless
 To Silva's love, was led to pitiless death.
 O hateful victory of blind wishes—prayers
 Which hell had overheard and swift fulfilled!
 The triumph was a torture, turning all
 The strength of passion into strength of pain.
 Remorse was born within him, that dire birth
 Which robs all else of nurture—cancerous,
 Forcing each pulse to feed its anguish, turning
 All sweetest residues of healthy life
 To fibrous clutches of slow misery.
 Silva had but rebelled—he was not free;
 And all the subtle cords that bound his soul
 Were tightened by the strain of one rash leap
 Made in defiance. He accused no more,
 But dumbly shrank before accusing throngs
 Of thoughts, the impetuous recurrent rush
 Of all his past-created, unchanged self.
 The Father came bareheaded, frocked, a rope
 Around his neck,—but clad with majesty,
 The strength of resolute undivided souls
 Who, owning law, obey it. In his hand
 He bore a crucifix, and praying, gazed
 Solely on that white image. But his guards
 Parted in front, and paused as they approached
 The centre where the stake was. Isidor
 Lifted his eyes to look around him—calm,
 Prepared to speak last words of willingness
 To meet his death—last words of faith unchanged,
 That, working for Christ's kingdom, he had wrought
 Righteously. But his glance met Silva's eyes
 And drew him. Even images of stone
 Look living with reproach on him who maims,
 Profanes, defiles them. Silva penitent
 Moved forward, would have knelt before the man
 Who still was one with all the sacred things
 That came back on him in their sacredness,
 Kindred, and oaths, and awe, and mystery.
 But at the sight, the Father thrust the cross
 With deprecating act before him, and his face
 Pale-quivering, flashed out horror like white light
 Flashed from the angel's sword that dooming drove
 The sinner to the wilderness. He spoke.]

FATHER ISIDOR.

Back from me, traitorous and accursed man!
 Defile not me, who grasp the holiest,
 With touch or breath! Thou foulest murderer!
 Fouler than Cain who struck his brother down
 In jealous rage, thou for thy base delight
 Hast oped the gate for wolves to come and tear

Uncounted brethren, weak and strong alike,
 The helpless priest, the warrior all unarmed
 Against a faithless leader: on thy head
 Will rest the sacrilege, on thy soul the blood.
 These blind barbarians, misbelievers, Moors,
 Are but as Pilate and his soldiery;
 Thou, Judas, weighted with that heaviest crime
 Which deepens hell! I warned you of this end.
 A traitorous leader, false to God and man,
 A knight apostate, you shall soon behold
 Above your people's blood the light of flames
 Kindled by you to burn me—burn the flesh
 Twin with your father's. O most wretched man!
 Whose memory shall be of broken oaths—
 Broken for lust—I turn away mine eyes
 Forever from you. See, the stake is ready
 And I am ready too.

DON SILVA.

It shall not be!

*(Raising his sword, he rushes in front of the guards who are advancing,
 and impedes them.)*

If you are human, Chief, hear my demand!
 Stretch not my soul upon the endless rack
 Of this man's torture!

ZARCA.

Stand aside, my lord!

Put up your sword. You vowed obedience
 To me, your chief. It was your latest vow.

DON SILVA.

No! hew me from the spot, or fasten me
 Amid the fagots too, if he must burn.

ZARCA.

What should befall that persecuting monk
 Was fixed before you came: no cruelty,
 No nicely measured torture, weight for weight
 Of injury, no luscious-toothed revenge
 That justifies the injurer by its joy:
 I seek but rescue and security
 For harmless men, and such security
 Means death to vipers and inquisitors.
 These fagots shall but innocently blaze
 In sign of gladness, when this man is dead,
 That one more torturer has left the earth.
 'Tis not for infidels to burn live men
 And ape the rules of Christian piety.
 This hard oppressor shall not die by fire:
 He mounts the gibbet, dies a speedy death,
 That, like a transfixed dragon, he may cease
 To vex mankind. Quick, guards, and clear the path!

[As well-trained hounds that hold their fleetness tense
 In watchful, loving fixity of dark eyes,
 And move with movement of their master's will,

The Gypsies with a wavelike swiftmess met
 Around the Father, and in wheeling course
 Passed beyond Silva to the gibbet's foot,
 Behind their chieftain. Sudden left alone
 With weapon bare, the multitude aloof,
 Silva was mazed in doubtful consciousness,
 As one who slumbering in the day awakes
 From striving into freedom, and yet feels
 His sense half captive to intangible things;
 Then with a flush of new decision sheathed
 His futile naked weapon, and strode quick
 To Zarca, speaking with a voice new-toned,
 The struggling soul's hoarse, suffocated cry
 Beneath the grappling anguish of despair.]

DON SILVA.

You, Zíncalo, devil, blackest infidel!
 You cannot hate that man as you hate me!
 Finish your torture—take me—lift me up
 And let the crowd spit at me—every Moor
 Shoot reeds at me, and kill me with slow death
 Beneath the mid-day fervor of the sun—
 Or crucify me with a thieving hound—
 Slake your hate so, and I will thank it: spare me
 Only this man!

ZARCA.

Madman, I hate you not.
 But if I did, my hate were poorly served
 By my device, if I should strive to mix
 A bitterer misery for you than to taste
 With leisure of a soul in unharmed limbs
 The flavor of your folly. For my course,
 It has a goal, and takes no truant path
 Because of you. I am your chief: to me
 You're nought more than a Zíncalo in revolt.

DON SILVA.

No, I'm no Zíncalo! I here disown
 The name I took in madness. Here I tear
 This badge away. I am a Catholic knight,
 A Spaniard who will die a Spaniard's death!

[Hark! while he casts the badge upon the ground
 And tramples on it, Silva hears a shout:
 Was it a shout that threatened him? He looked
 From out the dizzying flames of his own rage
 In hope of adversaries—and he saw above
 The form of Father Isidor upswung
 Convulsed with martyr throes; and knew the shout
 For wonted exultation of the crowd
 When malefactors die—or saints, or heroes.
 And now to him that white-froaked murdered form
 Which hanging judged him as its murderer,
 Turned to a symbol of his guilt, and stirred
 Tremors till then unwaked. With sudden snatch
 At something hidden in his breast, he strode
 Right upon Zarca: at the instant, down

Fell the great Chief, and Silva, staggering back,
 Heard not the Gypsies' shriek, felt not the fangs
 Of their fierce grasp—heard, felt but Zarca's words
 Which seemed his soul outleaping in a cry
 And urging men to run like rival waves
 Whose chivalry is but obedience.]

ZARCA (*as he falls*).

My daughter! call her! Call my daughter!

NADAR (*supporting ZARCA and crying to the Gypsies who have clutched SILVA*).

Stay!

Tear not the Spaniard, tie him to the stake :
 Hear what the Chief shall bid us—there is time !

[Swiftly they tied him, pleasing vengeance so
 With promise that would leave them free to watch
 Their stricken good, their Chief stretched helplessly
 Pillowed upon the strength of loving limbs.
 He heaved low groans, but would not spend his breath
 In useless words: he waited till *she* came,
 Keeping his life within the citadel
 Of one great hope. And now around him closed
 (But in wide circle, checked by loving fear)
 His people all, holding their wails suppressed
 Lest Death believed in should be over-bold :
 All life hung on their Chief—he would not die ;
 His image gone, there were no wholeness left
 To make a world of for the Zíncali's thought.
 Eager they stood, but hushed ; the outer crowd
 Spoke only in low murmurs, and some climbed
 And clung with legs and arms on perilous coignes,
 Striving to see where that colossal life
 Lay panting—lay a Titan struggling still
 To hold and give the precious hidden fire
 Before the stronger grappled him. Above
 The young bright morning cast athwart white walls
 Her shadows blue, and with their clear-cut line,
 Mildly relentless as the dial-hand's,
 Measured the shrinking future of an hour
 Which held a shrinking hope. And all the while
 The silent beat of time in each man's soul
 Made aching pulses.

But the cry, "She comes!"

Parted the crowd like waters: and she came.
 Swiftly as once before, inspired with joy,
 She flashed across the space and made new light,
 Glowing upon the glow of evening,
 So swiftly now she came, inspired with woe,
 Strong with the strength of all her father's pain,
 Thrilling her as with fire of rage divine
 And battling energy. She knew—saw all :
 The stake with Silva bound—her father pierced—
 To this she had been born: a second time
 Her father called her to the task of life.

She knelt beside him, Then he raised himself,

And on her face there flashed from his the light
 As of a star that waned, but flames anew
 In mighty dissolution: 'twas the flame
 Of a surviving trust, in agony.
 He spoke the parting prayer that was command,
 Must sway her will, and reign invisibly.]

ZARCA.

My daughter, you have promised—you will live
 To save our people. In my garments here
 I carry written pledges from the Moor:
 He will keep faith in Spain and Africa.
 Your weakness may be stronger than my strength,
 Winning more love. . . . I cannot tell the end. . . .
 I held my people's good within my breast.
 Behold, now I deliver it to you.
 See, it still breathes unstrangled—if it dies,
 Let not your failing will be murderer. . . .
 Rise, tell our people now I wait in pain . . .
 I cannot die until I hear them say
 They will obey you.

[Meek, she pressed her lips
 With slow solemnity upon his brow,
 Sealing her pledges. Firmly then she rose,
 And met her people's eyes with kindred gaze,
 Dark-flashing, fired by effort strenuous
 Trampling on pain.]

FEDALMA.

Ye Zincali all, who hear!
 Your Chief is dying: I his daughter live
 To do his dying will. He asks you now
 To promise me obedience as your Queen,
 That we may seek the land he won for us,
 And live the better life for which he toiled.
 Speak now, and fill my father's dying ear
 With promise that you will obey him dead,
 Obeying me his child.

[Straightway arose
 A shout of promise, sharpening into cries
 That seemed to plead despairingly with death.]

THE ZINCALI.

We will obey! Our Chief shall never die!
 We will obey him—will obey our Queen!
 [The shout unanimous, the concurrent rush
 Of many voices, quiring shook the air
 With multitudinous wave: now rose, now fell,
 Then rose again, the echoes following slow,
 As if the scattered brethren of the tribe
 Had caught afar and joined the ready vow.
 Then some could hold no longer, but must rush
 To kiss his dying feet, and some to kiss
 The hem of their Queen's garment. But she raised
 Her hand to hush them. "Hark! your Chief may speak
 Another wish." Quickly she kneeled again,

While they upon the ground kept motionless,
 With head outstretched. They heard his words; for now,
 Grasping at Nadar's arm, he spoke more loud,
 As one who, having fought and conquered, hurls
 His strength away with hurling off his shield.]

ZAROA.

Let loose the Spaniard! give him back his sword;
 He cannot move to any vengeance more—
 His soul is locked 'twixt two opposing crimes.
 I charge you let him go unharmed and free
 Now through your midst. . . .

[With that he sank again—

His breast heaved strongly tow'rd sharp sudden falls,
 And all his life seemed needed for each breath:
 Yet once he spoke.]

My daughter, lay your arm
 Beneath my head . . . so . . . bend and breathe on me.
 I cannot see you more . . . the Night is come.
 Be strong . . . remember . . . I can only . . . die.

[His voice went into silence, but his breast
 Heaved long and moaned: its broad strength kept a life
 That heard nought, saw nought, save what once had been,
 And what might be in days and realms afar—
 Which now in pale procession faded on
 Toward the thick darkness. And she bent above
 In sacramental watch to see great Death,
 Companion of her future, who would wear
 Forever in her eyes her father's form.

And yet she knew that hurrying feet had gone
 To do the Chief's behest, and in her soul
 He who was once its lord was being jarred
 With loosening of cords, that would not loose.
 The tightening torture of his anguish. This—
 Oh, she knew it!—knew it as martyrs knew
 The prongs that tore their flesh, while yet their tongues
 Refused the ease of lies. In moments high
 Space widens in the soul. And so she knelt,
 Clinging with piety and awed resolve
 Beside this altar of her father's life,
 Seeing long travel under solemn suns
 Stretching beyond it; never turned her eyes,
 Yet felt that Silva passed; beheld his face
 Pale, vivid, all alone, imploring her
 Across black waters fathomless.

And he passed.

The Gypsies made wide pathway, shrank aloof
 As those who fear to touch the thing they hate,
 Lest hate triumphant, mastering all the limbs,
 Should tear, bite, crush, in spite of hindering will.
 Slowly he walked, reluctant to be safe
 And bear dishonored life which none assailed;
 Walked hesitatingly, all his frame instinct
 With high-born spirit, never used to dread
 Or crouch for smiles, yet stung, yet quivering

With helpless strength, and in his soul convulsed
 By visions where pale horror held a lamp
 Over wide-reaching crime. Silence hung round :
 It seemed the Plaza hushed itself to hear
 His footsteps and the Chief's deep dying breath.
 Eyes quickened in the stillness, and the light
 Seemed one clear gaze upon his misery.
 And yet he could not pass her without pause :
 One instant he must pause and look at her ;
 But with that glance at her averted head,
 New-urged by pain he turned away and went,
 Carrying forever with him what he fled—
 Her murdered love—her love, a dear wronged ghost,
 Facing him, beauteous, 'mid the throngs of hell.

O fallen and forsaken ! were no hearts
 Amid that crowd, mindful of what had been ?—
 Hearts such as wait on beggared royalty,
 Or silent watch by sinners who despair ?

Silva had vanished. That dismissed revenge
 Made larger room for sorrow in fierce hearts ;
 And sorrow filled them. For the Chief was dead.
 The mighty breast subsided slow to calm,
 Slow from the face the ethereal spirit waned,
 As wanes the parting glory from the heights,
 And leaves them in their pallid majesty.
 Fedalma kissed the marble lips, and said,
 "He breathes no more." And then a long loud wail
 Poured out upon the morning, made her light
 Ghastly as smiles on some fair maniac's face
 Smiling unconscious o'er her bridegroom's corse.
 The wailing men in eager press closed round,
 And made a shadowing pall beneath the sun.
 They lifted reverent the prostrate strength,
 Sceptred anew by death. Fedalma walked
 Tearless, erect, following the dead—her cries
 Deep smothering in her breast, as one who guides
 Her children through the wilds, and sees and knows
 Of danger more than they, and feels more pangs,
 Yet shrinks not, groans not, bearing in her heart
 Their ignorant misery and their trust in her.

BOOK V.

THE eastward rocks of Almería's bay
 Answer long farewells of the travelling sun
 With softest glow as from an inward pulse
 Changing and flushing : all the Moorish ships
 Seem conscious too, and shoot out sudden shadows ;
 Their black hulls snatch a glory, and their sails
 Show variegated radiance, gently stirred
 Like broad wings poised. Two galleys moored apart
 Show decks as busy as a home of ants
 Storing new forage ; from their sides the boats,
 Slowly pushed off, anon with flashing oar
 Make transit to the quay's smooth-quarried edge,

Where thronging Gypsies are in haste to lade
 Each as it comes with grandames, babes, and wives,
 Or with dust-tinted goods, the company
 Of wandering years. Nought seems to lie unmoved,
 For 'mid the throng the lights and shadows play,
 And make all surface eager, while the boats
 Sway restless as a horse that heard the shouts
 And surging hum incessant. Naked limbs
 With beauteous ease bend, lift, and throw, or raise
 High signalling hands. The black-haired mother steps
 Athwart the boat's edge, and with opened arms
 A wandering Isis outcast from the gods,
 Leans towards her lifted little one. The boat
 Full-laden cuts the waves, and dirk-like cries
 Rise and then fall within it as it moves
 From high to lower and from bright to dark.
 Hither and thither, grave white-turbanned Moors
 Move helpfully, and some bring welcome gifts,
 Bright stuffs and cutlery, and bags of seed,
 To make new waving crops in Africa.
 Others aloof with folded arms slow-eyed
 Survey man's labor, saying, "God is great;"
 Or seek with question deep the Gypsies' root,
 And whether their false faith, being small, will prove
 Less damning than the copious false creeds
 Of Jews and Christians; Moslem subtlety
 Found balanced reasons, warranting suspense
 As to whose hell was deepest—'twas enough
 That there was room for all. Thus the sedate.
 The younger heads were busy with the tale
 Of that great Chief whose exploits helped the Moor.
 And, talking still, they shouldered past their friends
 Following some lure which held their distant gaze
 To eastward of the quay, where yet remained
 A low black tent close guarded all around
 By well-armed Gypsies. Fronting it above,
 Raised by stone-steps that sought a jutting strand,
 Fedalma stood and marked with anxious watch
 Each laden boat the remnant lessening
 Of cargo on the shore, or traced the course
 Of Nadar to and fro in hard command
 Of noisy tumult; imaging oft anew
 How much of labor still deferred the hour
 When they must lift the boat and bear away
 Her father's coffin, and her feet must quit
 This shore forever. Motionless she stood,
 Black-crowned with wreaths of many-shadowed hair;
 Black-robed, but bearing wide upon her breast
 Her father's golden necklace and his badge.
 Her limbs were motionless, but in her eyes
 And in her breathing lip's soft tremulous curve
 Was intense motion as of prisoned fire
 Escaping subtly in outleaping thought.

She watches anxiously, and yet she dreams:
 The busy moments now expand, now shrink
 To narrowing swarms within the reflux space

Of changeful consciousness. For in her thought
 Already she has left the fading shore,
 Sails with her people, seeks an unknown land,
 And bears the burning length of weary days
 That parching fall upon her father's hope,
 Which she must plant and see it wither only—
 Wither and die. She saw the end begun.
 The Gypsy hearts were not unfaithful: she
 Was centre to the savage loyalty
 Which vowed obedience to Zarca dead.
 But soon their natures missed the constant stress
 Of his command, that, while it fired, restrained
 By urgency supreme, and left no play
 To fickle impulse scattering desire.
 They loved their Queen, trusted in Zarca's child.
 Would bear her o'er the desert on their arms
 And think the weight a gladsome victory;
 But that great force which knit them into one,
 The invisible passion of her father's soul,
 That wrought them visibly into its will,
 And would have bound their lives with permanence,
 Was gone. Already Hassan and two bands,
 Drawn by fresh baits of gain, had newly sold
 Their service to the Moors, despite her call,
 Known as the echo of her father's will,
 To all the tribe, that they should pass with her
 Straightway to Telemsán. They were not moved
 By worse rebellion than the wilful wish
 To fashion their own service; they still meant
 To come when it should suit them. But she said,
 This is the cloud no bigger than a hand,
 Sure-threatening. In a little while, the tribe
 That was to be the ensign of the race,
 And draw it into conscious union,
 Itself would break in small and scattered bands
 That, living on scant prey, would still disperse
 And propagate forgetfulness. Brief years,
 And that great purpose fed with vital fire
 That might have glowed for half a century,
 Subduing, quickening, shaping, like a sun—
 Would be a faint tradition, flickering low
 In dying memories, fringing with dim light
 The nearer dark.

Far, far the future stretched
 Beyond that busy present on the quay,
 Far her straight path beyond it. Yet she watched
 To mark the growing hour, and yet in dream
 Alternate she beheld another track,
 And felt herself unseen pursuing it
 Close to a wanderer, who with haggard gaze
 Looked out on loneliness. The backward years—
 Oh, she would not forget them—would not drink
 Of waters that brought rest, while he far off
 Remembered. "Father, I renounced the joy;
 You must forgive the sorrow."

So she stood,
 Her struggling life compressed into that hour,

Yearning, resolving, conquering; though she seemed
Still as a tutelary image sent
To guard her people and to be the strength
Of some rock-citadel.

Below her sat
Slim mischievous Hinda, happy, red-bedecked
With rows of berries, grinning, nodding oft,
And shaking high her small dark arm and hand
Responsive to the black-maned Ismaël,
Who held aloft his spoil, and clad in skins
Seemed the Boy-prophet of the wilderness
Escaped from tasks prophetic. But anon
Hinda would backward turn upon her knees,
And like a pretty loving hound would bend
To fondle her Queen's feet, then lift her head
Hoping to feel the gently pressing palm
Which touched the deeper sense. Fedalma knew—
From out the black robe stretched her speaking hand
And shared the girl's content.

So the dire hours
Burdened with destiny—the death of hopes
Darkening long generations, or the birth
Of thoughts undying—such hours sweep along
In their aerial ocean measureless
Myriads of little joys, that ripen sweet
And soothe the sorrowful spirit of the world,
Groaning and travailing with the painful birth
Of slow redemption.

But emerging now
From eastward fringing lines of idling men
Quick Juan lightly sought the upward steps
Behind Fedalma, and two paces off,
With head uncovered, said in gentle tones,
"Lady Fedalma!"—(Juan's password now
Used by no other), and Fedalma turned,
Knowing who sought her. He advanced a step,
And meeting straight her large calm questioning gaze,
Warned her of some grave purport by a face
That told of trouble. Lower still he spoke.

JUAN.

Look from me, lady, towards a moving form
That quits the crowd and seeks the lonelier strand—
A tall and gray-clad pilgrim. . . .

[Solemnly
His low tones fell on her, as if she passed
Into religious dimness among tombs,
And trod on names in everlasting rest.
Lingeringly she looked, and then with voice
Deep and yet soft, like notes from some long chord
Responsive to thrilled air, said—]

FEDALMA.

It is he!

[Juan kept silence for a little space,
With reverent caution, lest his lighter grief
Might seem a wanton touch upon her pain.

But time was urging him with visible flight,
Changing the shadows: he must utter all.]

JUAN.

That man was young when last I pressed his hand—
In that dread moment when he left Bedmár.
He has aged since: the week has made him gray.
And yet I knew him—knew the white-streaked hair
Before I saw his face, as I should know
The tear-dimmed writing of a friend. See now—
Does he not linger—pause?—perhaps expect . . .

[Juan pled timidly: Fedalma's eyes
Flashed; and through all her frame there ran the shock
Of some sharp-wounding joy, like his who hastes
And dreads to come too late, and comes in time
To press a loved hand dying. She was mute
And made no gesture: all her being paused
In resolution, as some leonine wave
That makes a moment's silence ere it leaps.]

JUAN.

He came from Carthagera, in a boat
Too slight for safety; yon small two-oared boat
Below the rock; the fisher-boy within
Awaits his signal. But the pilgrim waits. . . .

FEDALMA.

Yes, I will go!—Father, I owe him this,
For loving me made all his misery.
And we will look once more—will say farewell
As in a solemn rite to strengthen us
For our eternal parting. Juan, stay
Here in my place, to warn me, were there need.
And, Hinda, follow me!

[All men who watched
Lost her regretfully, then drew content
From thought that she must quickly come again,
And filled the time with striving to be near.
She, down the steps, along the sandy brink
To where he stood, walked firm; with quickened step
The moment when each felt the other saw.
He moved at sight of her: their glances met;
It seemed they could no more remain aloof
Than nearing waters hurrying into one.
Yet their steps slackened and they paused apart,
Pressed backward by the force of memories
Which reigned supreme as death above desire.
Two paces off they stood and silently
Looked at each other. Was it well to speak?
Could speech be clearer, stronger, tell them more
Than that long gaze of their renouncing love?
They passed from silence hardly knowing how;
It seemed they heard each other's thought before.]

DON SILVA.

I go to be absorbed, to have my life
Washed into fitness for an offering
To injured Spain, But I have nought to give

For that last injury to her I loved
 Better than I loved Spain. I am accurst
 Above all sinners, being made the curse
 Of her I sinned for. Pardon? Penitence?
 When they have done their utmost, still beyond
 Out of their reach stands Injury unchanged
 And changeless. I should see it still in heaven—
 Out of my reach, forever in my sight:
 Wearing your grief, 'twould hide the smiling seraph.
 I bring no pining prayer, Fedalma—ask
 No balm of pardon that may soothe my soul
 For others' bleeding wounds: I am not come
 To say, "Forgive me:" you must not forgive,
 For you must see me ever as I am—
 Your father's. . . .

FEDALMA.

Speak it not! Calamity
 Comes like a deluge and o'erfloods our crimes,
 Till sin is hidden in woe. You—I—we two,
 Grasping we knew not what, that seemed delight,
 Opened the sluices of that deep.

DON SILVA.

We two?—

Fedalma, you were blameless, helpless.

FEDALMA.

No!

It shall not be that you did aught alone.
 For when we loved I willed to reign in you,
 And I was jealous even of the day
 If it could gladden you apart from me.
 And so, it must be that I shared each deed
 Our love was root of.

DON SILVA.

Dear! you share the woe—

Nay, the worst dart of vengeance fell on you.

FEDALMA.

Vengeance! She does but sweep us with her skirts—
 She takes large space, and lies a baleful light
 Revolving with long years—sees children's children,
 Blights them in their prime. . . . Oh, if two lovers leaned
 To breathe one air and spread a pestilence,
 They would but lie two livid victims dead
 Amid the city of the dying. We
 With our poor petty lives have strangled one
 That ages watch for vainly.

DON SILVA.

Deep despair

Fills all your tones as with slow agony.
 Speak words that narrow anguish to some shape:
 Tell me what dread is close before you?

FEDALMA.

None.

No dread, but clear assurance of the end.

My father held within his mighty frame
 A people's life: great futures died with him
 Never to rise, until the time shall ripe
 Some other hero with the will to save
 The outcast Zíncali.

DON SILVA.

And yet they shout—
 I heard it—sounded as the plenteous rush
 Of full-fed sources, shaking their wild souls
 With power that promised sway.

FEDALMA.

Ah yes, that ~~show~~
 Came from full hearts: they meant obedience.
 But they are orphaned: their poor childish fest
 Are vagabond in spite of love, and stray
 Forgetful after little lures. For me—
 I am but as a funeral urn that bears
 The ashes of a leader.

DON SILVA.

O great God!
 What am I but a miserable brand
 Lit by mysterious wrath? I lie cast down
 A blackened branch upon the desolate ground
 Where once I kindled ruin. I shall drink
 No cup of purest water but will taste
 Bitter with thy lone hopelessness, Fedalma.

FEDALMA.

Nay, Silva, think of me as one who sees
 A light serene and strong on one sole path
 Which she will tread till death . . .
 He trusted me, and I will keep his trust:
 My life shall be its temple. I will plant
 His sacred hope within the sanctuary
 And die its priestess—though I die alone,
 A hoary woman on the altar-step,
 Cold 'mid cold ashes. That is my chief good.
 The deepest hunger of a faithful heart
 Is faithfulness. Wish me nought else. And you—
 You too will live. . . .

DON SILVA.

I go to Rome to seek
 The right to use my knightly sword again;
 The right to fill my place and live or die
 So that all Spaniards shall not curse my name.
 I sate one hour upon the barren rock
 And longed to kill myself; but then I said,
 I will not leave my name in infamy,
 I will not be perpetual rottenness
 Upon the Spaniard's air. If I must sink
 At last to hell, I will not take my stand
 Among the coward crew who could not bear
 The harm themselves had done, which others bore.

My young life yet may fill some fatal breach,
 And I will take no pardon, not my own,
 Not God's—no pardon idly on my knees:
 But it shall come to me upon my feet
 And in the thick of action, and each deed
 That carried shame and wrong shall be the sting
 That drives me higher up the steep of honor
 In deeds of duteous service to that Spain
 Who nourished me on her expectant breast,
 The heir of highest gifts. I will not fling
 My earthly being down for carrion
 To fill the air with loathing: I will be
 The living prey of some fierce noble death
 That leaps upon me while I move. Aloud
 I said, "I will redeem my name," and then—
 I know not if aloud: I felt the words
 Drinking up all my senses—"She still lives.
 I would not quit the dear familiar earth
 Where both of us behold the self-same sun,
 Where there can be no strangeness 'twixt our thoughts;
 So deep as their communion." Resolute
 I rose and walked.—Fedalma, think of me
 As one who will regain the only life
 Where he is other than apostate—one
 Who seeks but to renew and keep the vows
 Of Spanish knight and noble. But the breach
 Outside those vows—the fatal second breach—
 Lies a dark gulf where I have nought to cast,
 Not even expiation—poor pretence,
 Which changes nought but what survives the past,
 And raises not the dead. That deep dark gulf
 Divides us.

FEDALMA.

Yes, forever. We must walk
 Apart unto the end. Our marriage rite
 Is our resolve that we will each be true
 To high allegiance, higher than our love.
 Our dear young love—its breath was happiness!
 But it had grown upon a larger life
 Which tore its roots asunder. We rebelled—
 The larger life subdued us. Yet we are wed;
 For we shall carry each the pressure deep
 Of the other's soul. I soon shall leave the shore.
 The winds to-night will bear me far away.
 My lord, farewell!

He did not say "Farewell."
 But neither knew that he was silent. She,
 For one long moment, moved not. They knew nought
 Save that they parted; for their mutual gaze
 As with their souls' full speech forbade their hands
 To seek each other—those oft-clasping hands
 Which had a memory of their own, and went
 Widowed of one dear touch for evermore.
 At last she turned and with swift movement passed,
 Beckoning to Hinda, who was bending low
 And lingered still to wash her shells, but soon

Leaping and scampering followed, while her Queen
Mounted the steps again and took her place,
Which Juan rendered silently.

And now
The press upon the quay was thinned; the ground
Was cleared of cumbering heaps, the eager shouts
Had sunk, and left a murmur more restrained
By common purpose. All the men ashore
Were gathering into ordered companies,
And with less clamor filled the waiting boats,
As if the speaking light commanded them
To quiet speed: for now the farewell glow
Was on the topmost heights, and where far ships
Were southward tending, tranquil, slow, and white
Upon the luminous meadow toward the verge.
The quay was in still shadow, and the boats
Went sombrely upon the sombre waves.
Fedalma watched again; but now her gaze
Takes in the eastward bay, where that small bark
Which held the fisher-boy floats weightier
With one more life, that rests upon the oar
Watching with her. He would not go away
Till she was gone; he would not turn his face
Away from her at parting: but the sea
Should widen slowly 'twixt their seeking eyes.

The time was coming. Nadar had approached.
Was the Queen ready? Would she follow now
Her father's body? For the largest boat
Was waiting at the quay, the last strong band
Of Zíncali had ranged themselves in lines
To guard her passage and to follow her.
"Yes, I am ready;" and with action prompt
They cast aside the Gypsy's wandering tomb,
And fenced the space from curious Moors who pressed
To see Chief Zarca's coffin as it lay.
They raised it slowly, holding it aloft
On shoulders proud to bear the heavy load.
Bound on the coffin lay the chieftain's arms,
His Gypsy garments and his coat of mail.
Fedalma saw the burden lifted high,
And then descending followed. All was still.
The Moors aloof could hear the struggling steps
Beneath the lowered burden at the boat—
The struggling calls subdued, till safe released
It lay within, the space around it filled
By black-haired Gypsies. Then Fedalma stepped
From off the shore and saw it flee away—
The land that bred her helping the resolve
Which exiled her forever.

It was night
Before the ships weighed anchor and gave sail:
Fresh Night emergent in her clearness, lit
By the large crescent moon, with Hesperus,
And those great stars that lead the eager host.
Fedalma stood and watched the little bark
Lying jet-black upon moon-whitened waves.

Silva was standing too. He too divined
A steadfast form that held him with its thought,
And eyes that sought him vanishing: he saw
The waters widen slowly, till at last
Straining he gazed, and knew not if he gazed
On aught out blackness overhung by stars.

NOTES TO "THE SPANISH GYPSY."

P. 122. *Cactus.*

The Indian fig (*Opuntia*), like the other *Cactaceæ*, is believed to have been introduced into Europe from South America; but every one who has been in the south of Spain will understand why the anachronism has been chosen.

P. 182. *Marranos.*

The name given by the Spanish Jews to the multitudes of their race converted to Christianity at the end of the fourteenth century and beginning of the fifteenth. The lofty derivation from *Maran-atha*, the Lord cometh, seems hardly called for, seeing that *marrano* is Spanish for *pig*. The "old Christians" learned to use the word as a term of contempt for the "new Christians," or converted Jews and their descendants; but not too monotonously, for they often interchanged it with the fine old crusted opprobrium of the name *Jew*. Still, many Marranos held the highest secular and ecclesiastical prizes in Spain, and were respected accordingly.

P. 193. *Celestial Baron.*

The Spaniards conceived their patron Santiago (St. James), the great captain of their armies, as a knight and baron: to them, the incongruity would have lain in conceiving him simply as a Galilean fisherman. And their legend was adopted with respect by devout mediæval minds generally. Dante, in an elevated passage of the *Paradiso*—the memorable opening of *Canto xxv.*—chooses to introduce the Apostle James as *il barone*.

"Indi sì mosse un lume verso noi
Di quella schiera, ond 'uscì la primizia
Che lasciò Cristo de' vicari suoi.
E la mia Donna piena de letizia
Mi disse: Mira, mira, ecco 'l barone
Per cui laggiù si visita Galizia."

P. 194. *The Seven Parts.*

Las Siete Partidas (The Seven Parts) is the title given to the code of laws compiled under Alfonso the Tenth, who reigned in the latter half of the thirteenth century—1252-1284. The passage in the text is translated from *Partida II., Ley II.* The whole preamble is worth citing in its old Spanish:

"*Como deben ser escogidos los caballeros.*"

"Antiguamente para facer caballeros escogien de los venadores de monte, que

son homes que sufren grande laceria, et carpinteros, et ferreros, et pedreros, porque usan mucho a ferir et son fuerte de manos; et otrosi de los carniceros, por razon que usan matar las cosas vivas et esparcer la sangre dellas; et aun cataban otra cosa en escogiendolos que fuesen bien faccionadas de miembros para ser recios, et fuertes et ligeros. Et esta manera de escoger usaron los antiguos muy grant tiempo; mas porque despues vieron muchas vegadas que estos atales non habiendo vergüenza olvidaban todas estas cosas sobredichas, et en logar de vincer sus enemigos vencíense ellos, tovieron por bien los sabidores destas cosas que catasen homes para esto que hobiesen naturalmiente en sí vergüenza. Et sobresto dixo un sabio que habie nombre Vegorio que fabló de la órden de caballería, que la vergüenza vieda al caballero que non fuya de la batalla, et por ende ella le face ser vencedor; ca mucho tovieron que era mejor el homo flaco et sofridor, que el fuerte et ligero para foir. Et por esto sobre todas las otras cosas cataron que fuesen homes porque se guardasen de facer cosa por que podiesen caer en vergüenza; et porque estos fueron escogidos de buenos logares et algo, que quiere tanto decir en language de España como bien, por eso los llamaron fijosdalgo, que muestra atanto como fijos de bien. Et en algunos otros logares los llamaron gentiles, et tomaron este nombre de gentileza que muestra atanto como nobleza de bondat, porque los gentiles fueron nobles homes et buenos, et vevieron mas ordenadamente que las otras gentes. Et esta gentileza aviene en tres maneras; la una por linage, la segunda por saber, et la tercera por bondat de armas et de costumbres et de maneras. Et comoquier que estos que la ganau por su sabidoria ó por su bondat, son con derecho llamados nobles et gentiles, mayormiente lo son aquellos que la han por linage antiguamente, et facen buena vida porque les viene de lueñe como por heredit; et por ende son mas encargados de facer bien et guardarse de yerro et de malestanz; ca non tan solamiente quando lo facen resciben daño et vergüenza ellos mismos, ma aun aquellos onde ellos vienen."

BROTHER JACOB

BROTHER JACOB.

“Trompeurs, c'est pour vous que j'écris, attendez-vous à la pareille.”

LA FONTAINE.

CHAPTER I.

AMONG the many fatalities attending the bloom of young desire, that of blindly taking to the confectionery line has not, perhaps, been sufficiently considered. How is the son of a British yeoman, who has been fed principally on salt pork and yeast dumplings, to know that there is satiety for the human stomach even in a paradise of glass jars full of sugared almonds and pink lozenges, and that the tedium of life can reach a pitch where plum-buns at discretion cease to offer the slightest enticement? Or how, at the tender age when a confectioner seems to him a very prince whom all the world must envy—who breakfasts on macaroons, dines on meringues, sups on twelfth-cake, and fills up the intermediate hours with sugar-candy or peppermint—how is he to foresee the day of sad wisdom, when he will discern that the confectioner's calling is not socially influential or favorable to a soaring ambition? I have known a man who turned out to have a metaphysical genius, incautiously, in the period of youthful buoyancy, commence his career as a dancing master; and you may imagine the use that was made of this initial mistake by opponents who felt

themselves bound to warn the public against his doctrine of the Inconceivable. He couldn't give up his dancing lessons, because he made his bread by them, and metaphysics would not have found him in so much as salt to his bread. It was nearly the same with Mr. David Faux and the confectionery business. His uncle, the butler at the great house close by Brigford, had made a pet of him in his early boyhood, and it was on a visit to this uncle that the confectioners' shops in that brilliant town had, on a single day, fired his tender imagination. He carried home the pleasing illusion that a confectioner must be at once the happiest and the foremost of men, since the things he made were not only the most beautiful to behold, but the very best eating, and such as the Lord Mayor must always order largely for his private recreation; so that when his father declared he must be put to a trade, David chose his line without a moment's hesitation, and, with a rashness inspired by a sweet tooth, wedded himself irrevocably to confectionery. Soon, however, the tooth lost its relish and fell into blank indifference, and all the while his mind expanded, his ambition took new shapes, which could hardly be satisfied within the sphere his youthful ardor had chosen. But what was he to do? He was a young man of much mental activity, and, above all, gifted with a spirit of contrivance; but then his faculties would not tell with great effect in any other medium than that of candied sugars, conserves, and pastry. Say what you will about the identity of the reasoning process in all branches of thought, or about the advantage of coming to subjects with a fresh mind, the adjustment of butter to flour, and of heat to pas-

try, is *not* the best preparation for the office of Prime-minister; besides, in the present imperfectly organized state of society there are social barriers. David could invent delightful things in the way of drop-cakes, and he had the widest views of the "rock" department; but in other directions he certainly felt hampered by the want of knowledge and practical skill; and the world is so inconveniently constituted, that the vague consciousness of being a fine fellow is no guarantee of success in any line of business.

This difficulty pressed with some severity on Mr. David Faux even before his apprenticeship was ended. His soul swelled with an impatient sense that he ought to become something very remarkable—that it was quite out of the question for him to put up with a narrow lot as other men did: he scorned the idea that he could accept an average. He was sure there was nothing average about him: even such a person as Mrs. Tibbits, the washer-woman, perceived it, and probably had a preference for his linen. At that particular period he was weighing out gingerbread-nuts; but such an anomaly could not continue. No position could be suited to Mr. David Faux that was not in the highest degree easy to the flesh and flattering to the spirit. If he had fallen on the present times, and enjoyed the advantages of a Mechanics' Institute, he would certainly have taken to literature and have written reviews; but his education had not been liberal. He had read some novels from the adjoining circulating library, and had even bought the story of "Inkle and Yarico," which had made him feel very sorry for poor Mr. Inkle, so that his ideas might not have been below the mark of

the literary calling; but his spelling and diction were too unconventional.

When a man is not adequately appreciated or comfortably placed in his own country, his thoughts naturally turn towards foreign climes; and David's imagination circled round and round the utmost limits of his geographical knowledge in search of a country where a young gentleman of pasty visage, lipless mouth, and stumpy hair, would be likely to be received with the hospitable enthusiasm which he had a right to expect. Having a general idea of America as a country where the population was chiefly black, it appeared to him the most propitious destination for an emigrant who, to begin with, had the broad and easily recognizable merit of whiteness; and this idea gradually took such strong possession of him that Satan seized the opportunity of suggesting to him that he might emigrate under easier circumstances if he supplied himself with a little money from his master's till. But that evil spirit, whose understanding, I am convinced, has been much overrated, quite wasted his time on this occasion. David would certainly have liked well to have some of his master's money in his pocket, if he had been sure his master would have been the only man to suffer for it; but he was a cautious youth, and quite determined to run no risks on his own account. So he stayed out his apprenticeship, and committed no act of dishonesty that was at all likely to be discovered, reserving his plan of emigration for a future opportunity. And the circumstances under which he carried it out were in this wise. Having been at home a week or two partaking of the family beans, he had used his leisure in ascertaining a

fact which was of considerable importance to him, namely, that his mother had a small sum in guineas painfully saved from her maiden perquisites, and kept in the corner of a drawer where her baby linen had reposed for the last twenty years — ever since her son David had taken to his feet, with a slight promise of bow-legs, which had not been altogether unfulfilled. Mr. Faux, senior, had told his son very frankly that he must not look to being set up in business by *him*: with seven sons, and one of them a very healthy and well-developed idiot, who consumed a dumpling about eight inches in diameter every day, it was pretty well if they got a hundred apiece at his death. Under these circumstances what was David to do? It was certainly hard that he should take his mother's money; but he saw no other ready means of getting any, and it was not to be expected that a young man of his merit should put up with inconveniences that could be avoided. Besides, it is not robbery to take property belonging to your mother; she doesn't prosecute you. And David was very well behaved to his mother; he comforted her by speaking highly of himself to her, and assuring her that he never fell into the vices he saw practised by other youths of his own age, and that he was particularly fond of honesty. If his mother would have given him her twenty guineas as a reward of this noble disposition he really would not have stolen them from her, and it would have been more agreeable to his feelings. Nevertheless, to an active mind like David's, ingenuity is not without its pleasures. It was rather an interesting occupation to become stealthily acquainted with the wards of his mother's simple key (not in the least like

Chubb's patent), and to get one that would do its work equally well, and also to arrange a little drama by which he would escape suspicion, and run no risk of forfeiting the prospective hundred at his father's death, which would be convenient in the improbable case of his *not* making a large fortune in the "Indies."

First, he spoke freely of his intention to start shortly for Liverpool, and take ship for America: a resolution which cost his good mother some pain, for, after Jacob the idiot, there was not one of her sons to whom her heart clung more than to her youngest-born, David. Next, it appeared to him that Sunday afternoon, when everybody was gone to church, except Jacob and the cow-boy, was so singularly favorable an opportunity for sons who wanted to appropriate their mother's guineas, that he half thought it must have been kindly intended by Providence for such purposes. Especially the third Sunday in Lent, because Jacob had been out on one of his occasional wanderings for the last two days; and David, being a timid young man, had a considerable dread and hatred of Jacob, as of a large personage who went about habitually with a pitchfork in his hand.

Nothing could be easier, then, than for David on this Sunday afternoon to decline going to church on the ground that he was going to tea at Mr. Lunn's, whose pretty daughter Sally had been an early flame of his, and, when the church-goers were at a safe distance, to abstract the guineas from their wooden box and slip them into a small canvas bag—nothing easier than to call to the cow-boy that he was going, and tell him to keep an eye on the house for fear of Sunday tramps. David thought it would be easy, too, to get to a small

thicket, and bury his bag in a hole he had already made and covered up under the roots of an old hollow ash; and he had, in fact, found the hole without a moment's difficulty, had uncovered it, and was about gently to drop the bag into it, when the sound of a large body rustling towards him with something like a bellow was such a surprise to David, who, as a gentleman gifted with much contrivance, was naturally only prepared for what he expected, that instead of dropping the bag gently, he let it fall so as to make it untwist and vomit forth the shining guineas. In the same moment he looked up and saw his dear brother Jacob close upon him, holding the pitchfork so that the bright smooth prongs were a yard in advance of his own body, and about a foot off David's. (A learned friend, to whom I once narrated this history, observed that it was David's guilt which made these prongs formidable, and that the *mens nil conscia sibi* strips a pitchfork of all terrors. I thought this idea so valuable that I obtained his leave to use it, on condition of suppressing his name.) Nevertheless, David did not entirely lose his presence of mind; for in that case he would have sunk on the earth or started backward; whereas he kept his ground and smiled at Jacob, who nodded his head up and down and said, "Hoich, Zavy!" in a painfully equivocal manner. David's heart was beating audibly, and if he had had any lips they would have been pale; but his mental activity, instead of being paralyzed, was stimulated; while he was inwardly praying (he always prayed when he was much frightened)—"Oh, save me this once, and I'll never get into danger again!"—he was thrusting his hand into his pocket in search of a box of yellow lozenges, which he

had brought with him from Brigford among other delicacies of the same portable kind, as a means of conciliating proud beauty, and more particularly the beauty of Miss Sarah Lunn. Not one of these delicacies had he ever offered to poor Jacob, for David was not a young man to waste his jujubes and barley-sugar in giving pleasure to people from whom he expected nothing. But an idiot with equivocal intentions and a pitchfork is as well worth flattering and cajoling as if he were Louis Napoleon. So David, with a promptitude equal to the occasion, drew out his box of yellow lozenges, lifted the lid, and performed a pantomime with his mouth and fingers which was meant to imply that he was delighted to see his dear brother Jacob, and seized the opportunity of making him a small present which he would find particularly agreeable to the taste. Jacob, you understand, was not an intense idiot, but within a certain limited range knew how to choose the good and reject the evil. He took one lozenge, by way of test, and sucked it as if he had been a philosopher; then in as great an ecstasy at its new and complex savor as Caliban at the taste of Trinculo's wine, chuckled and stroked this suddenly beneficent brother, and held out his hand for more; for, except in fits of anger, Jacob was not ferocious or needlessly predatory. David's courage half returned, and he left off praying; pouring a dozen lozenges into Jacob's palm, and trying to look very fond of him. He congratulated himself that he had formed the plan of going to see Miss Sally Lunn this afternoon, and that, as a consequence, he had brought with him these propitiatory delicacies. He was certainly a lucky fellow; indeed it was always likely Provi-

dence should be fonder of him than of other apprentices, and since he *was* to be interrupted, why, an idiot was preferable to any other sort of witness. For the first time in his life David thought he saw the advantage of idiots.

As for Jacob, he had thrust his pitchfork into the ground, and had thrown himself down beside it, in thorough abandonment to the unprecedented pleasure of having five lozenges in his mouth at once, blinking meanwhile, and making inarticulate sounds of gustative content. He had not yet given any sign of noticing the guineas, but in seating himself he had laid his broad right hand on them, and unconsciously kept it in that position, absorbed in the sensations of his palate. If he could only be kept so occupied with the lozenges as not to see the guineas before David could manage to cover them! That was David's best hope of safety, for Jacob knew his mother's guineas; it had been part of their common experience as boys to be allowed to look at these handsome coins, and rattle them in their box on high days and holidays, and among all Jacob's narrow experiences as to money, this was likely to be the most memorable.

"Here, Jacob," said David, in an insinuating tone, handing the box to him, "I'll give 'em all to you. Run!—make haste!—else somebody 'll come and take 'em."

David, not having studied the psychology of idiots, was not aware that they are not to be wrought upon by imaginative fears. Jacob took the box with his left hand, but saw no necessity for running away. Was ever a promising young man, wishing to lay the foundation of his fortune by appropriating his mother's

guineas, obstructed by such a day-mare as this? But the moment must come when Jacob would move his right hand to draw off the lid of the tin box, and then David would sweep the guineas into the hole with the utmost address and swiftness, and immediately seat himself upon them. Ah, no! It's of no use to have foresight when you are dealing with an idiot; he is not to be calculated upon. Jacob's right hand was given to vague clutching and throwing; it suddenly clutched the guineas as if they had been so many pebbles, and was raised in an attitude which promised to scatter them like seed over a distant bramble, when, from some prompting or other—probably of an unwonted sensation—it paused, descended to Jacob's knee, and opened slowly under the inspection of Jacob's dull eyes. David began to pray again, but immediately desisted—another resource having occurred to him.

"Mother! zinnies!" exclaimed the innocent Jacob. Then, looking at David, he said, interrogatively, "Box?"

"Hush! hush!" said David, summoning all his ingenuity in this severe strait. "See, Jacob!" He took the tin box from his brother's hand, and emptied it of the lozenges, returning half of them to Jacob, but secretly keeping the rest in his own hand. Then he held out the empty box, and said, "Here's the box, Jacob—the box for the guineas," gently sweeping them from Jacob's palm into the box.

This procedure was not objectionable to Jacob; on the contrary, the guineas clinked so pleasantly as they fell that he wished for a repetition of the sound, and snatching the box, began to rattle it very gleefully. David, seizing the opportunity, deposited his reserve of

lozenges in the ground and hastily swept some earth over them. "Look, Jacob," he said at last. Jacob paused from his clinking and looked into the hole, while David began to scratch away the earth, as if in doubtful expectation. When the lozenges were laid bare, he took them out one by one, and gave them to Jacob.

"Hush!" he said, in a loud whisper; "tell nobody—all for Jacob—hush—sh—sh! Put guineas in the hole—they'll come out like this." To make the lesson more complete, he took a guinea, and lowering it into the hole, said, "Put in *so*." Then, as he took the last lozenge out, he said, "Come out *so*," and put the lozenge into Jacob's hospitable mouth.

Jacob turned his head on one side, looked first at his brother and then at the hole, like a reflective monkey, and finally laid the box of guineas in the hole with much decision. David made haste to add every one of the stray coins, put on the lid, and covered it well with earth, saying, in his most coaxing tone,

"Take 'm out to-morrow, Jacob; all for Jacob! Hush—sh—sh!"

Jacob, to whom this once indifferent brother had all at once become a sort of sweet-tasted Fetich, stroked David's best coat with his adhesive fingers, and then hugged him with an accompaniment of that mingled chuckling and gurgling by which he was accustomed to express the milder passions. But if he had chosen to bite a small morsel out of his beneficent brother's cheek, David would have been obliged to bear it.

And here I must pause to point out to you the short-sightedness of human contrivance. This ingenious

young man, Mr. David Faux, thought he had achieved a triumph of cunning when he had associated himself in his brother's rudimentary mind with the flavor of yellow lozenges. But he had yet to learn that it is a dreadful thing to make an idiot fond of you, when you yourself are not of an affectionate disposition; especially an idiot with a pitchfork—obviously a difficult friend to shake off by rough usage.

It may seem to you rather a blundering contrivance for a clever young man to bury the guineas. But if everything had turned out as David had calculated, you would have seen that his plan was worthy of his talents. The guineas would have lain safely in the earth while the theft was discovered, and David, with the calm of conscious innocence, would have lingered at home, reluctant to say good-bye to his dear mother while she was in grief about her guineas; till, at length, on the eve of his departure, he would have disinterred them in the strictest privacy, and carried them on his own person without inconvenience. But David, you perceive, had reckoned without his host, or, to speak more precisely, without his idiot brother—an item of so uncertain and fluctuating a character that I doubt whether he would not have puzzled the astute heroes of M. De Balzac, whose foresight is so remarkably at home in the future.

It was clear to David now that he had only one alternative before him—he must either renounce the guineas, by quietly putting them back in his mother's drawer (a course not unattended with difficulty), or he must leave more than a suspicion behind him, by departing early next morning without giving notice, and with

the guineas in his pocket. For if he gave notice that he was going, his mother, he knew, would insist on fetching from her box of guineas the three she had always promised him as his share; indeed, in his original plan he had counted on this as a means by which the theft would be discovered under circumstances that would themselves speak for his innocence; but now, as I need hardly explain to you, that well-combined plan was completely frustrated. Even if David could have bribed Jacob with perpetual lozenges, an idiot's secrecy is itself betrayal. He dared not even go to tea at Mr. Lunn's, for in that case he would have lost sight of Jacob, who, in his impatience for the crop of lozenges, might scratch up the box again while he was absent, and carry it home—depriving him at once of reputation and guineas. No! he must think of nothing all the rest of this day but of coaxing Jacob and keeping him out of mischief. It was a fatiguing and anxious evening to David; nevertheless, he dared not go to sleep without tying a piece of string to his thumb and great toe, to secure his frequent waking; for he meant to be up with the first peep of dawn, and be far out of reach before breakfast-time. His father, he thought, would certainly cut him off with a shilling; but what then? Such a striking young man as he would be sure to be well received in the West Indies: in foreign countries there are always openings—even for cats. It was probable that some Princess Yarico would want him to marry her, and make him presents of very large jewels beforehand, after which he needn't marry her unless he liked. David had made up his mind not to steal any more, even from people who were fond of

him ; it was an unpleasant way of making your fortune in a world where you were likely to be surprised in the act by brothers. Such alarms did not agree with David's constitution, and he had felt so much nausea this evening that I have no doubt his liver was affected. Besides, he would have been greatly hurt not to be thought well of in the world ; he always meant to make a figure, and be thought worthy of the best seats and the best morsels.

Ruminating to this effect on the brilliant future in reserve for him, David, by the help of his check-string, kept himself on the alert to seize the time of earliest dawn for his rising and departure. His brothers, of course, were early risers, but he should anticipate them by at least an hour and a half, and the little room which he had to himself as only an occasional visitor, had its window over the horse-block, so that he could slip out through the window without the least difficulty. Jacob, the horrible Jacob, had an awkward trick of getting up before everybody else, to stem his hunger by emptying the milk-bowl that was "duly set" for him ; but of late he had taken to sleeping in the hay-loft, and if he came into the house, it would be on the opposite side to that from which David was making his exit. There was no need to think of Jacob, yet David was liberal enough to bestow a curse on him—it was the only thing he ever did bestow gratuitously. His small bundle of clothes was ready packed, and he was soon treading lightly on the steps of the horse-block, soon walking at a smart pace across the fields towards the thicket. It would take him no more than two minutes to get out the box ; he could make out

the tree it was under by the pale strip where the bark was off, although the dawning light was rather dimmer in the thicket. But what, in the name of—burned pastry—was that large body with a staff planted beside it, close at the foot of the ash-tree? David paused, not to make up his mind as to the nature of the apparition—he had not the happiness of doubting for a moment that the staff was Jacob's pitchfork—but to gather the self-command necessary for addressing his brother with a sufficiently honeyed accent. Jacob was absorbed in scratching up the earth, and had not heard David's approach.

"I say, Jacob," said David, in a loud whisper, just as the tin box was lifted out of the hole.

Jacob looked up, and discerning his sweet-flavored brother, nodded and grinned in the dim light in a way that made him seem to David like a triumphant demon. If he had been of an impetuous disposition, he would have snatched the pitchfork from the ground and impaled this fraternal demon. But David was by no means impetuous; he was a young man greatly given to calculate consequences—a habit which has been held to be the foundation of virtue. But somehow it had not precisely that effect in David; he calculated whether an action would harm himself, or whether it would only harm other people. In the former case he was very timid about satisfying his immediate desires, but in the latter he would risk the result with much courage.

"Give it *me*, Jacob," he said, stooping down and patting his brother. "Let us see."

Jacob, finding the lid rather tight, gave the box to his brother in perfect faith. David raised the lid and

shook his head, while Jacob put his finger in and took out a guinea to taste whether the metamorphosis into lozenges was complete and satisfactory.

"No, Jacob; too soon, too soon," said David, when the guinea had been tasted. "Give it me; we'll go and bury it somewhere else. We'll put it in yonder," he added, pointing vaguely towards the distance.

David screwed on the lid, while Jacob, looking grave, rose and grasped his pitchfork. Then seeing David's bundle, he snatched it, like a too officious Newfoundland, stuck his pitchfork into it, and carried it over his shoulder in triumph, as he accompanied David and the box out of the thicket.

What on earth was David to do? It would have been easy to frown at Jacob, and kick him, and order him to get away; but David dared as soon have kicked the bull. Jacob was quiet as long as he was treated indulgently; but on the slightest show of anger he became unmanageable, and was liable to fits of fury, which would have made him formidable even without his pitchfork. There was no mastery to be obtained over him except by kindness or guile. David tried guile.

"Go, Jacob," he said, when they were out of the thicket, pointing towards the house as he spoke—"go and fetch me a spade—a spade. But give *me* the bundle," he added, trying to reach it from the fork, where it hung high above Jacob's tall shoulder.

But Jacob showed as much alacrity in obeying as a wasp shows in leaving a sugar-basin. Near David he felt himself in the vicinity of lozenges; he chuckled and rubbed his brother's back, brandishing the bundle higher out of reach. David, with an inward groan,

changed his tactics, and walked on as fast as he could. It was not safe to linger. Jacob would get tired of following him, or, at all events, could be eluded. If they could once get to the distant high-road, a coach would overtake them, David would mount it, having previously, by some ingenious means, secured his bundle, and then Jacob might howl and flourish his pitchfork as much as he liked. Meanwhile he was under the fatal necessity of being very kind to this ogre, and of providing a large breakfast for him when they stopped at a roadside inn. It was already three hours since they had started, and David was tired. Would no coach be coming up soon? he inquired. No coach for the next two hours. But there was a carrier's cart to come immediately, on its way to the next town. If he could slip out, even leaving his bundle behind, and get into the cart without Jacob! But there was a new obstacle. Jacob had recently discovered a remnant of sugar-candy in one of his brother's tail-pockets, and since then had cautiously kept his hold on that limb of the garment, perhaps with an expectation that there would be a further development of sugar-candy after a longer or shorter interval. Now every one who has worn a coat will understand the sensibilities that must keep a man from starting away in a hurry when there is a grasp on his coat-tail. David looked forward to being well received among strangers, but it might make a difference if he had only one tail to his coat.

He felt himself in a cold perspiration. He could walk no more; he must get into the cart and let Jacob get in with him. Presently a cheering idea occurred to him. After so large a breakfast, Jacob would be sure to go to sleep in the cart; you see at once that David

meant to seize his bundle, jump out, and be free. His expectation was partly fulfilled; Jacob did go to sleep in the cart, but it was in a peculiar attitude—it was with his arms tightly fastened round his dear brother's body; and if ever David attempted to move, the grasp tightened with the force of an affectionate boa-constrictor.

"Th' innicent's fond on you," observed the carrier, thinking that David was probably an amiable brother, and wishing to pay him a compliment.

David groaned. The ways of thieving were not ways of pleasantness. Oh, why had he an idiot brother? Or why, in general, was the world so constituted that a man could not take his mother's guineas comfortably? David became grimly speculative.

Copious dinner at noon for Jacob, but little dinner, because little appetite, for David. Instead of eating, he plied Jacob with beer; for through this liberality he descried a hope. Jacob fell into a dead sleep at last, *without* having his arms round David, who paid the reckoning, took his bundle, and walked off. In another half hour he was on the coach on his way to Liverpool, smiling the smile of the triumphant wicked. He was rid of Jacob—he was bound for the Indies, where a gullible princess awaited him. He would never steal any more, but there would be no need; he would show himself so deserving that people would make him presents freely. He must give up the notion of his father's legacy; but it was not likely he would ever want that trifle; and even if he did, why, it was a compensation to think that in being forever divided from his family he was divided from Jacob, more terrible than Gorgon or Demogorgon to David's timid green eyes. Thank Heaven, he should never see Jacob any more!

CHAPTER II.

It was nearly six years after the departure of Mr. David Faux for the West Indies that the vacant shop in the market-place at Grimworth was understood to have been let to the stranger with a sallow complexion and a buff cravat, whose first appearance had caused some excitement in the bar of the Woolpack, where he had called to wait for the coach.

Grimworth, to a discerning eye, was a good place to set up shopkeeping in. There was no competition in it at present; the Church people had their own grocer and draper; the Dissenters had theirs; and the two or three butchers found a ready market for their joints without strict reference to religious persuasion—except that the rector's wife had given a general order for the veal sweetbreads and the mutton kidneys, while Mr. Rodd, the Baptist minister, had requested that, so far as was compatible with the fair accommodation of other customers, the sheep's trotters might be reserved for him. And it was likely to be a growing place, for the trustees of Mr. Zephaniah Crypt's Charity, under the stimulus of a late visitation by commissioners, were beginning to apply long-accumulating funds to the rebuilding of the Yellow Coat School, which was henceforth to be carried forward on a greatly extended scale, the testator having left no restrictions concerning the curriculum, but only concerning the coat.

The shopkeepers at Grimworth were by no means

unanimous as to the advantages promised by this prospect of increased population and trading, being substantial men, who liked doing a quiet business in which they were sure of their customers, and could calculate their returns to a nicety. Hitherto it had been held a point of honor by the families in Grimworth parish to buy their sugar and their flannel at the shops where their fathers and mothers had bought before them ; but if new-comers were to bring in the system of neck-and-neck trading, and solicit feminine eyes by gown pieces laid in fan-like folds, and surmounted by artificial flowers, giving them a factitious charm (for on what human figure would a gown sit like a fan, or what female head was like a bunch of china-asters?), or if new grocers were to fill their windows with mountains of currants and sugar, made seductive by contrast and tickets, what security was there for Grimworth, that a vagrant spirit in shopping, once introduced, would not in the end carry the most important families to the larger market-town of Cattleton, where, business being done on a system of small profits and quick returns, the fashions were of the freshest, and goods of all kinds might be bought at an advantage?

With this view of the times predominant among the tradespeople at Grimworth, their uncertainty concerning the nature of the business which the sallow-complexioned stranger was about to set up in the vacant shop naturally gave some additional strength to the fears of the less sanguine. If he was going to sell drapery, it was probable that a pale-faced fellow like that would deal in showy and inferior articles—printed cottons and muslins which would leave their dye in the

wash-tub, jobbed linen full of knots, and flannel that would soon look like gauze. If grocery, then it was to be hoped that no mother of a family would trust the teas of an untried grocer. Such things had been known in some parishes as tradesmen going about canvassing for custom with cards in their pockets: when people came from nobody knew where, there was no knowing what they might do. It was a thousand pities that Mr. Moffat, the auctioneer and broker, had died without leaving anybody to follow him in the business, and Mrs. Cleve's trustee ought to have known better than to let a shop to a stranger. Even the discovery that ovens were being put up on the premises, and that the shop was, in fact, being fitted up for a confectioner and pastry-cook's business, hitherto unknown in Grimworth, did not quite suffice to turn the scale in the new-comer's favor, though the landlady at the Woolpack defended him warmly, said he seemed to be a very clever young man, and from what she could make out came of a very good family; indeed, was most likely a good many people's betters.

It certainly made a blaze of light and color, almost as if a rainbow had suddenly descended into the market-place, when, one fine morning, the shutters were taken down from the new shop, and the two windows displayed their decorations. On one side there were the variegated tints of collared and marbled meats, set off by bright green leaves, the pale brown of glazed pies, the rich tones of sauces and bottled fruits enclosed in their veil of glass—altogether a sight to bring tears into the eyes of a Dutch painter; and on the other there was a predominance of the more delicate hues of pink

and white and yellow and buff in the abundant lozenges, candies, sweet biscuits, and icings which to the eyes of a bilious person might easily have been blended into a fairy landscape in Turner's latest style. What a sight to dawn upon the eyes of Grimworth children! They almost forgot to go to their dinner that day, their appetites being preoccupied with imaginary sugar-plums; and I think even Punch, setting up his tabernacle in the market-place, would not have succeeded in drawing them away from those shop windows, where they stood according to gradations of size and strength, the biggest and strongest being nearest the window, and the little ones in the outermost rows lifting wide-open eyes and mouths towards the upper tier of jars, like small birds at meal-time.

The elder inhabitants pished and pshawed a little at the folly of the new shop-keeper in venturing on such an outlay in goods that would not keep. To be sure, Christmas was coming, but what housewife in Grimworth would not think shame to furnish forth her table with articles that were not home-cooked? No, no; Mr. Edward Freely, as he called himself, was deceived if he thought Grimworth money was to flow into his pockets on such terms.

Edward Freely was the name that shone in gilt letters on a mazarine ground over the door-place of the new shop—a generous-sounding name that might have belonged to the open-hearted, improvident hero of an old comedy, who would have delighted in raining sugared almonds, like a new manna-gift, among that small generation outside the windows. But Mr. Edward Freely was a man whose impulses were kept in due subor-

dination : he held that the desire for sweets and pastry must only be satisfied in a direct ratio with the power of paying for them. If the smallest child in Grimworth would go to him with a half-penny in its tiny fist, he would, after ringing the half-penny, deliver a just equivalent in "rock." He was not a man to cheat even the smallest child ; he often said so, observing at the same time that he loved honesty, and also that he was very tender-hearted, though he didn't show his feelings as some people did.

Either in reward of such virtue, or according to some more hidden law of sequence, Mr. Freely's business, in spite of prejudice, started under favorable auspices. For Mrs. Chaloner, the rector's wife, was among the earliest customers at the shop, thinking it only right to encourage a new parishioner who had made a decorous appearance at church ; and she found Mr. Freely a most civil, obliging young man, and intelligent to a surprising degree for a confectioner ; well-principled, too, for in giving her useful hints about choosing sugars he had thrown much light on the dishonesty of other tradesmen. Moreover, he had been in the West Indies, and had seen the very estate which had been her poor grandfather's property ; and he said the missionaries were the only cause of the negro's discontent—an observing young man, evidently. Mrs. Chaloner ordered wine-biscuits and olives, and gave Mr. Freely to understand that she should find his shop a great convenience. So did the doctor's wife, and so did Mrs. Gate, at the large carding mill, who, having high connections frequently visiting her, might be expected to have a large consumption of ratafias and macaroons.

The less aristocratic matrons of Grimworth seemed likely at first to justify their husbands' confidence that they would never pay a percentage of profits on drop-cakes, instead of making their own, or get up a hollow show of liberal house-keeping by purchasing slices of collared meat when a neighbor came in for supper. But it is my task to narrate the gradual corruption of Grimworth manners from their primitive simplicity—a melancholy task, if it were not cheered by the prospect of the fine peripeteia or downfall by which the progress of the corruption was ultimately checked.

It was young Mrs. Steene, the veterinary surgeon's wife, who first gave way to temptation. I fear she had been rather over-educated for her station in life, for she knew by heart many passages in "Lalla Rookh," the "Corsair," and the "Siege of Corinth," which had given her a distaste for domestic occupations, and caused her a withering disappointment at the discovery that Mr. Steene, since his marriage, had lost all interest in the "bulbul," openly preferred discussing the nature of spavin with a coarse neighbor, and was angry if the pudding turned out watery—indeed, was simply a top-booted "vet," who came in hungry at dinner-time, and not in the least like a nobleman turned corsair out of pure scorn for his race, or like a renegade with a turban and crescent, unless it were in the irritability of his temper. And anger is such a very different thing in top-boots!

This brutal man had invited a supper-party for Christmas-eve, when he would expect to see mince-pies on the table. Mrs. Steene had prepared her mince-meat, and had devoted much butter, fine flour, and

labor to the making of a batch of pies in the morning; but they proved to be so very heavy when they came out of the oven that she could only think with trembling of the moment when her husband should catch sight of them on the supper-table. He would storm at her, she was certain, and before all the company; and then she should never help crying. It was so dreadful to think she had come to that, after the bulbul and everything! Suddenly the thought darted through her mind that *this once* she might send for a dish of mince-pies from Freely's: she knew he had some. But what was to become of the eighteen heavy mince-pies? Oh, it was of no use thinking about that; it was very expensive—indeed, making mince-pies at all was a great expense, when they were not sure to turn out well: it would be much better to buy them ready-made. You paid a little more for them, but there was no risk of waste.

Such was the sophistry with which this misguided young woman— Enough. Mrs. Steene sent for the mince-pies, and, I am grieved to add, garbled her household accounts in order to conceal the fact from her husband. This was the second step in a downward course, all owing to a young woman's being out of harmony with her circumstances, yearning after renegades and bulbuls, and being subject to claims from a veterinary surgeon fond of mince-pies. The third step was to harden herself by telling the fact of the bought mince-pies to her intimate friend Mrs. Mole, who had already guessed it, and who subsequently encouraged herself in buying a mould of jelly, instead of exerting her own skill, by the reflection that "other people" did the

same sort of thing. The infection spread; soon there was a party or clique in Grimworth on the side of "buying at Freely's;" and many husbands, kept for some time in the dark on this point, innocently swallowed at two mouthfuls a tart on which they were paying a profit of a hundred per cent., and as innocently encouraged a fatal disingenuousness in the partners of their bosoms by praising the pastry. Others, more keen-sighted, winked at the too frequent presentation on washing-days and at impromptu suppers of superior spiced beef, which flattered their palates more than the cold remnants they had formerly been contented with. Every housewife who had once "bought at Freely's" felt a secret joy when she detected a similar perversion in her neighbor's practice, and soon only two or three old-fashioned mistresses of families held out in the protest against the growing demoralization, saying to their neighbors who came to sup with them, "I can't offer you Freely's beef, or Freely's cheese-cakes; everything in our house is home-made. I'm afraid you'll hardly have any appetite for our plain pastry." The doctor, whose cook was not satisfactory, the curate, who kept no cook, and the mining agent, who was a great *bon vivant*, even began to rely on Freely for the greater part of their dinner when they wished to give an entertainment of some brilliancy. In short, the business of manufacturing the more fanciful viands was fast passing out of the hands of maids and matrons in private families, and was becoming the work of a special commercial organ.

I am not ignorant that this sort of thing is called the inevitable course of civilization, division of labor, and

so forth, and that the maids and matrons may be said to have had their hands set free from cookery to add to the wealth of society in some other way. Only it happened at Grimworth, which, to be sure, was a low place, that the maids and matrons could do nothing with their hands at all better than cooking; not even those who had always made sad cakes and leathery pastry. And so it came to pass that the progress of civilization at Grimworth was not otherwise apparent than in the impoverishment of men, the gossiping idleness of women, and the heightening prosperity of Mr. Edward Freely.

The Yellow Coat School was a double source of profit to the calculating confectioner, for he opened an eating-room for the superior workmen employed on the new school, and he accommodated the pupils at the old school by giving great attention to the fancy-sugar department. When I think of the sweet-tasted swans and other ingenious white shapes crunched by the small teeth of that rising generation, I am glad to remember that a certain amount of calcareous food has been held good for young creatures whose bones are not quite formed; for I have observed these delicacies to have an inorganic flavor which would have recommended them greatly to that young lady of the *Spectator's* acquaintance who habitually made her dessert on the stems of tobacco-pipes.

As for the confectioner himself, he made his way gradually into Grimworth homes, as his commodities did, in spite of some initial repugnance. Somehow or other his reception as a guest seemed a thing that required justifying, like the purchasing of his pastry. In

the first place, he was a stranger, and therefore open to suspicion ; secondly, the confectionery business was so entirely new at Grimworth that its place in the scale of rank had not been distinctly ascertained. There was no doubt about drapers and grocers, when they came of good old Grimworth families, like Mr. Luff and Mr. Prettyman: they visited with the Palfreys, and the Palfreys farmed their own land, played many a game at whist with the doctor, and condescended a little towards the timber merchant, who had lately taken to the coal trade also, and had got new furniture ; but whether a confectioner should be admitted to this higher level of respectability, or should be understood to find his associates among butchers and bakers, was a new question on which tradition threw no light. His being a bachelor was in his favor, and would, perhaps, have been enough to turn the scale, even if Mr. Edward Freely's other personal pretensions had been of an entirely insignificant cast. But so far from this, it very soon appeared that he was a remarkable young man, who had been in the West Indies, and had seen many wonders by sea and land, so that he could charm the ears of Grimworth Desdemonas with stories of strange fish, especially sharks, which he had stabbed in the nick of time by bravely plunging overboard just as the monster was turning on his side to devour the cook's mate ; of terrible fevers which he had undergone in a land where the wind blows from all quarters at once ; of rounds of toast cut straight from the bread-fruit trees ; of toes bitten off by land-crabs ; of large honors that had been offered to him as a man who knew what was what, and was, therefore, particularly needed in a tropical

climate; and of a Creole heiress who had wept bitterly at his departure. Such conversational talents as these, we know, will overcome disadvantages of complexion; and young Towers, whose cheeks were of the finest pink, set off by a fringe of dark whisker, was quite eclipsed by the presence of the sallow Mr. Freely. So exceptional a confectioner elevated his business, and might well begin to make disengaged hearts flutter a little.

Fathers and mothers were naturally more slow and cautious in their recognition of the new-comer's merits.

"He's an amusing fellow," said Mr. Prettyman, the highly respectable grocer (Mrs. Prettyman was a Miss Fothergill, and her sister had married a London mercer) — "he's an amusing fellow, and I've no objection to his making one at the Oyster Club; but he's a bit too fond of riding the high horse. He's uncommonly knowing, I'll allow; but how came he to go to the Indies? I should like that answered. It's unnatural in a confectioner. I'm not fond of people that have been beyond seas, if they can't give a good account how they happened to go. When folks go so far off, it's because they've got little credit nearer home—that's my opinion. However, he's got some good rum; but I don't want to be hand-and-glove with him, for all that."

It was this kind of dim suspicion which beclouded the view of Mr. Freely's qualities in the maturer minds of Grimworth through the early months of his residence there. But when the confectioner ceased to be a novelty, the suspicions also ceased to be novel, and people got tired of hinting at them, especially as they seemed to be refuted by his advancing prosperity and impor-

tance. Mr. Freely was becoming a person of influence in the parish ; he was found useful as an overseer of the poor, having great firmness in enduring other people's pain—which firmness, he said, was due to his great benevolence ; he always did what was good for people in the end. Mr. Chaloner had even selected him as clergyman's church-warden, for he was a very handy man, and much more of Mr. Chaloner's opinion in everything about church business than the older parishioners. Mr. Freely was a very regular churchman, but at the Oyster Club he was sometimes a little free in his conversation, more than hinting at a life of Sultanic self-indulgence which he had passed in the West Indies, shaking his head now and then and smiling rather bitterly, as men are wont to do when they intimate that they have become a little too wise to be instructed about a world which has long been flat and stale to them.

For some time he was quite general in his attentions to the fair sex, combining the gallantries of a lady's man with a severity of criticism on the person and manners of absent belles, which tended rather to stimulate in the feminine breast the desire to conquer the approval of so fastidious a judge. Nothing short of the very best in the department of female charms and virtues could suffice to kindle the ardor of Mr. Edward Freely, who had become familiar with the most luxuriant and dazzling beauty in the West Indies. It may seem incredible to you that a confectioner should have ideas and conversation so much resembling those to be met with in a higher walk of life, but you must remember that he had not merely travelled, he had also bow-legs and a sallow, small-featured visage, so that nature herself

had stamped him for a fastidious connoisseur of the fair sex.

At last, however, it seemed clear that Cupid had found a sharper arrow than usual, and that Mr. Freely's heart was pierced. It was the general talk among the young people at Grimworth. But was it really love, and not rather ambition? Miss Fullilove, the timber merchant's daughter, was quite sure that if *she* were Miss Penny Palfrey she would be cautious; it was not a good sign when men looked so much above themselves for a wife. For it was no less a person than Miss Penelope Palfrey, second daughter of the Mr. Palfrey who farmed his own land, that had attracted Mr. Freely's peculiar regard and conquered his fastidiousness; and no wonder, for the Ideal, as exhibited in the finest waxwork, was perhaps never so closely approached by the Real as in the person of the pretty Penelope. Her yellowish flaxen hair did not curl naturally, I admit, but its bright, crisp ringlets were such smooth, perfect miniature tubes that you would have longed to pass your little finger through them and feel their soft elasticity. She wore them in a crop—for in those days, when society was in a healthier state, young ladies wore crops long after they were twenty, and Penelope was not yet nineteen. Like the waxen Ideal, she had round blue eyes, and round nostrils in her little nose, and teeth such as the Ideal would be seen to have if it ever showed them. Altogether, she was a small, round thing, as neat as a pink and white double daisy, and as guileless; for I hope you do not think it argues any guile in a pretty damsel of nineteen to think that she should like to have a beau and be "engaged," when her elder sister had already been in that position

a year and a half. To be sure, there was young Towers always coming to the house; but Penny felt convinced he only came to see her brother, for he never had anything to say to her, and never offered her his arm, and was as awkward and silent as possible.

It is not unlikely that Mr. Freely had early been smitten by Penny's charms as brought under his observation at church, but he had to make his way in society a little before he could come into nearer contact with them; and even after he was well received in Grimworth families, it was a long while before he could converse with Penny otherwise than in an incidental meeting at Mr. Luff's. It was not so easy to get invited to Long Meadows, the residence of the Palfreys; for though Mr. Palfrey had been losing money of late years—not being able quite to recover his feet after the terrible murrain which forced him to borrow—his family were far from considering themselves on the same level even as the old-established tradespeople with whom they visited; for the greatest people, even kings and queens, must visit with somebody, and the equals of the great are scarce. They were especially scarce at Grimworth, which, as I have before observed, was a low parish, mentioned with the most scornful brevity in gazetteers. Even the great people there were far behind those of their own standing in other parts of this realm. Mr. Palfrey's farm-yard doors had the paint all worn off them, and the front garden walks had long been merged in a general weediness. Still his father had been called Squire Palfrey, and had been respected by the last Grimworth generation as a man who could afford to drink too much in his own house.

Pretty Penny was not blind to the fact that Mr. Freely

admired her, and she felt sure that it was he who had sent her a beautiful valentine; but her sister seemed to think so lightly of him (all engaged young ladies think lightly of the gentlemen to whom they are not engaged), that Penny dared never mention him, and trembled and blushed whenever they met him, thinking of the valentine, which was very strong in its expressions, and which she felt guilty of knowing by heart. A man who had been to the Indies, and knew the sea so well, seemed to her a sort of public character, almost like Robinson Crusoe or Captain Cook; and Penny had always wished her husband to be a remarkable personage, likely to be put in Mangnall's Questions, with which register of the immortals she had become acquainted during her one year at a boarding-school. Only it seemed strange that a remarkable man should be a confectioner and pastry-cook, and this anomaly quite disturbed Penny's dreams. Her brothers, she knew, laughed at men who couldn't sit on horseback well, and called them tailors; but her brothers were very rough, and were quite without that power of anecdote which made Mr. Freely such a delightful companion. He was a very good man, she thought; for she had heard him say at Mr. Luff's, one day, that he always wished to do his duty in whatever state of life he might be placed; and he knew a great deal of poetry, for one day he had repeated a verse of a song. She wondered if he had made the words of the valentine. It ended in this way:

“Without thee, it is pain to live;
But with thee, it were sweet to die.”

Poor Mr. Freely! her father would very likely object; she felt sure he would, for he always called Mr. Freely

“that sugar-plum fellow.” Oh, it was very cruel, when true-love was crossed in that way, and all because Mr. Freely was a confectioner! Well, Penny would be true to him, for all that; and since his being a confectioner gave her an opportunity of showing her faithfulness, she was glad of it. Edward Freely was a pretty name, much better than John Towers. Young Towers had offered her a rose out of his button-hole the other day, blushing very much; but she refused it, and thought with delight how much Mr. Freely would be comforted if he knew her firmness of mind.

Poor little Penny! the days were so very long among the daisies on a grazing farm, and thought is so active, how was it possible that the inward drama should not get the start of the outward? I have known young ladies much better educated, and with an outward world diversified by instructive lectures, to say nothing of literature and highly developed fancy-work, who have spun a cocoon of visionary joys and sorrows for themselves, just as Penny did. Her elder sister, Letitia, who had a prouder style of beauty and a more worldly ambition, was engaged to a wool-factor, who came all the way from Cattleton to see her; and everybody knows that a wool-factor takes a very high rank, sometimes driving a double-bodied gig. Letty's notions got higher every day, and Penny never dared to speak of her cherished griefs to her lofty sister; never dared to propose that they should call at Mr. Freely's to buy licorice, though she had prepared for such an incident by mentioning a slight sore throat. So she had to pass the shop on the other side of the market-place, and reflect, with a suppressed sigh, that behind those pink and white

jars somebody was thinking of her tenderly, unconscious of the small space that divided her from him.

And it was quite true that, when business permitted, Mr. Freely thought a great deal of Penny. He thought her prettiness comparable to the loveliest things in confectionery; he judged her to be of submissive temper—likely to wait upon him as well as if she had been a negress, and to be silently terrified when his liver made him irritable; and he considered the Palfrey family quite the best in the parish possessing marriageable daughters. On the whole, he thought her worthy to become Mrs. Edward Freely, and all the more so because it would probably require some ingenuity to win her. Mr. Palfrey was capable of horsewhipping a too rash pretender to his daughter's hand; and, moreover, he had three tall sons: it was clear that a suitor would be at a disadvantage with such a family, unless travel and natural acumen had given him a countervailing power of contrivance. And the first idea that occurred to him in the matter was that Mr. Palfrey would object less if he knew that the Freelys were a much higher family than his own. It had been foolish modesty in him hitherto to conceal the fact that a branch of the Freelys held a manor in Yorkshire, and to shut up the portrait of his great-uncle the admiral, instead of hanging it up where a family portrait should be hung—over the mantel-piece in the parlor. Admiral Freely, K.C.B., once placed in this conspicuous position, was seen to have had one arm only and one eye—in these points resembling the heroic Nelson—while a certain pallid insignificance of feature confirmed the relationship between himself and his grandnephew.

Next, Mr. Freely was seized with an irrepressible ambition to possess Mrs. Palfrey's receipt for brawn, hers being pronounced on all hands to be superior to his own—as he informed her in a very flattering letter carried by his errand-boy. Now Mrs. Palfrey, like other geniuses, wrought by instinct rather than by rule, and possessed no receipts—indeed, despised all people who used them, observing that people who pickled by book must pickle by weights and measures, and such nonsense; as for herself, her weights and measures were the tip of her finger and the tip of her tongue; and if you went nearer, why, of course, for dry goods like flour and spice, you went by handfuls and pinches; and for wet, there was a middle-sized jug—quite the best thing, whether for much or little, because you might know how much a teacupful was, if you'd got any use of your senses, and you might be sure it would take five middle-sized jugs to make a gallon.

Knowledge of this kind is like Titian's coloring—difficult to communicate; and as Mrs. Palfrey, once remarkably handsome, had now become rather stout and asthmatical, and scarcely ever left home, her oral teaching could hardly be given anywhere except at Long Meadows. Even a matron is not insusceptible to flattery, and the prospect of a visitor whose great object would be to listen to her conversation was not without its charms to Mrs. Palfrey. Since there was no receipt to be sent, in reply to Mr. Freely's humble request, she called on her more docile daughter, Penny, to write a note, telling him that her mother would be glad to see him and talk with him on brawn any day that he could call at Long Meadows. Penny obeyed with a

trembling hand, thinking how wonderfully things came about in this world.

In this way Mr. Freely got himself introduced into the home of the Palfreys, and notwithstanding a tendency in the male part of the family to jeer at him a little as "peaky" and bow-legged, he presently established his position as an accepted and frequent guest. Young Towers looked at him with increasing disgust when they met at the house on a Sunday, and secretly longed to try his ferret upon him, as a piece of vermin which that valuable animal would be likely to tackle with unhesitating vigor. But—so blind sometimes are parents—neither Mr. nor Mrs. Palfrey suspected that Penny would have anything to say to a tradesman of questionable rank, whose youthful bloom was much withered. Young Towers, they thought, had an eye to her, and *that* was likely enough to be a match some day; but Penny was a child at present. And all the while Penny was imagining the circumstances under which Mr. Freely would make her an offer; perhaps down by the row of damson-trees, when they were in the garden before tea; perhaps by letter—in which case how would the letter begin? "Dearest Penelope?" or "My dear Miss Penelope?" or straight off, without dear anything, as seemed the most natural when people were embarrassed? But however he might make the offer, she would not accept it without her father's consent: she would always be true to Mr. Freely, but she would not disobey her father. For Penny was a good girl, though some of her female friends were afterwards of opinion that it spoke ill for her not to have felt an instinctive repugnance to Mr. Freely.

But he was cautious, and wished to be quite sure of the ground he trod on. His views in marriage were not entirely sentimental, but were as duly mingled with considerations of what would be advantageous to a man in his position, as if he had had a very large amount of money spent on his education. He was not a man to fall in love in the wrong place, and so he applied himself quite as much to conciliate the favor of the parents as to secure the attachment of Penny. Mrs. Palfrey had not been inaccessible to flattery, and her husband, being also of mortal mould, would not, it might be hoped, be proof against rum—that very fine Jamaica rum of which Mr. Freely expected always to have a supply sent him from Jamaica. It was not easy to get Mr. Palfrey into the parlor behind the shop, where a mild back-street light fell on the features of the heroic admiral; but by getting hold of him rather late one evening, as he was about to return home from Grimworth, the aspiring lover succeeded in persuading him to sup on some collared beef which, after Mrs. Palfrey's brawn, he would find the very best of cold eating.

From that hour Mr. Freely felt sure of success: being in privacy with an estimable man old enough to be his father, and being rather lonely in the world, it was natural he should unbosom himself a little on subjects which he could not speak of in a mixed circle—especially concerning his expectations from his uncle in Jamaica, who had no children, and loved his nephew Edward better than any one else in the world, though he had been so hurt at his leaving Jamaica that he had threatened to cut him off with a shilling. However,

he had since written to state his full forgiveness, and though he was an eccentric old gentleman and could not bear to give away money during his life, Mr. Edward Freely could show Mr. Palfrey the letter which declared plainly enough who would be the affectionate uncle's heir. Mr. Palfrey actually saw the letter, and could not help admiring the spirit of the nephew who declared that such brilliant hopes as these made no difference to his conduct; he should work at his humble business and make his modest fortune at it all the same. If the Jamaica estate was to come to him, well and good. It was nothing very surprising for one of the Freely family to have an estate left him, considering the lands that family had possessed in time gone by—nay, still possessed in the Northumberland branch. Would not Mr. Palfrey take another glass of rum? and also look at the last year's balance of the accounts? Mr. Freely was a man who cared to possess personal virtues, and did not pique himself on his family, though some men would. We know how easily the great Leviathan may be led when once there is a hook in his nose or a bridle in his jaws. Mr. Palfrey was a large man, but, like Leviathan's, his bulk went against him when once he had taken a turning. He was not a mercurial man, who easily changed his point of view. Enough. Before two months were over he had given his consent to Mr. Freely's marriage with his daughter Penny, and having hit on a formula by which he could justify it, fenced off all doubts and objections, his own included. The formula was this: "I'm not a man to put my nose up an entry before I know where it leads."

Little Penny was very proud and fluttering, but

hardly so happy as she expected to be in an engagement. She wondered if young Towers cared much about it, for he had not been to the house lately, and her sister and brothers were rather inclined to sneer than to sympathize. Grimworth rang with the news. All men extolled Mr. Freely's good-fortune; while the women, with the tender solicitude characteristic of the sex, wished the marriage might turn out well.

While affairs were at this triumphant juncture, Mr. Freely one morning observed that a stone-carver who had been breakfasting in the eating-room had left a newspaper behind. It was the *X-shire Gazette*, and X-shire being a county not unknown to Mr. Freely, he felt some curiosity to glance over it, and especially over the advertisements. A slight flush came over his face as he read. It was produced by the following announcement: "If David Faux, son of Jonathan Faux, late of Gilsbrook, will apply at the office of Mr. Strutt, attorney, of Rodham, he will hear of something to his advantage."

"Father's dead!" exclaimed Mr. Freely, involuntarily. "Can he have left me a legacy?"

CHAPTER III.

PERHAPS it was a result quite different from your expectations that Mr. David Faux should have returned from the West Indies only a few years after his arrival there, and have set up in his old business, like any plain man who had never travelled. But these cases do occur

in life. Since, as we know, men change their skies and see new constellations without changing their souls, it will follow sometimes that they don't change their business under those novel circumstances.

Certainly this result was contrary to David's own expectations. He had looked forward, you are aware, to a brilliant career among "the blacks;" but, either because they had already seen too many white men, or for some other reason, they did not at once recognize him as a superior order of human being; besides, there were no princesses among them. Nobody in Jamaica was anxious to maintain David for the mere pleasure of his society; and those hidden merits of a man which are so well known to himself were as little recognized there as they notoriously are in the effete society of the Old World. So that in the dark hints that David threw out at the Oyster Club about that life of Sultanic self-indulgence spent by him in the luxurious Indies, I really think he was doing himself a wrong; I believe he worked for his bread, and, in fact, took to cooking again, as, after all, the only department in which he could offer skilled labor. He had formed several ingenious plans by which he meant to circumvent people of large fortune and small faculty; but then he never met with exactly the right people under exactly the right circumstances. David's devices for getting rich without work had apparently no direct relation with the world outside him, as his confectionery receipts had. It is possible to pass a great many bad half-pennies and bad half-crowns, but I believe there has no instance been known of passing a half-penny or a half-crown as a sovereign. A sharper can drive a brisk trade in this

world: it is undeniable that there may be a fine career for him if he will dare consequences; but David was too timid to be a sharper, or venture in any way among the man-traps of the law. He dared rob nobody but his mother. And so he had to fall back on the genuine value there was in him—to be content to pass as a good half-penny, or, to speak more accurately, as a good confectioner. For in spite of some additional reading and observation, there was nothing else he could make so much money by; nay, he found in himself even a capability of extending his skill in this direction, and embracing all forms of cookery, while in other branches of human labor he began to see that it was not possible for him to shine. Fate was too strong for him; he had thought to master her inclination, and had fled over the seas to that end; but she caught him, tied an apron round him, and snatching him from all other devices, made him devise cakes and patties in a kitchen at Kingstown. He was getting submissive to her, since she paid him with tolerable gains; but fevers and prickly heat, and other evils incidental to cooks in ardent climates, made him long for his native land; so he took ship once more, carrying his six years' savings, and seeing distinctly, this time, what were fate's intentions as to his career. If you question me closely as to whether all the money with which he set up at Grimworth consisted of pure and simple earnings, I am obliged to confess that he got a sum or two for charitably abstaining from mentioning some other people's misdemeanors. Altogether, since no prospects were attached to his family name, and since a new christening seemed a suitable commencement of a new life,

Mr. David Faux thought it as well to call himself Mr. Edward Freely.

But lo! now, in opposition to all calculable probability, some benefit appeared to be attached to the name of David Faux. Should he neglect it, as beneath the attention of a prosperous tradesman? It might bring him into contact with his family again, and he felt no yearnings in that direction; moreover, he had small belief that the "something to his advantage" could be anything considerable. On the other hand, even a small gain is pleasant, and the promise of it in this instance was so surprising that David felt his curiosity awakened. The scale dipped at last on the side of writing to the lawyer, and, to be brief, the correspondence ended in an appointment for a meeting between David and his eldest brother at Mr. Strutt's, the vague "something" having been defined as a legacy from his father of eighty-two pounds three shillings.

David, you know, had expected to be disinherited; and so he would have been if he had not, like some other indifferent sons, come of excellent parents, whose conscience made them scrupulous, where much more highly instructed people often feel themselves warranted in following the bent of their indignation. Good Mrs. Faux could never forget that she had brought this ill-conditioned son into the world when he was in that entirely helpless state which excluded the smallest choice on his part; and, somehow or other, she felt that his going wrong would be his father's and mother's fault, if they failed in one tittle of their parental duty. Her notion of parental duty was not of a high and subtle kind, but it included giving him his due share of the

family property ; for when a man had got a little honest money of his own, was he so likely to steal ? To cut the delinquent son off with a shilling was like delivering him over to his evil propensities. No ; let the sum of twenty guineas which he had stolen be deducted from his share, and then let the sum of three guineas be put back from it, seeing that his mother had always considered three of the twenty guineas as his ; and though he had run away, and was, perhaps, gone across the sea, let the money be left to him all the same, and be kept in reserve for his possible return. Mr. Faux agreed to his wife's views, and made a codicil to his will accordingly, in time to die with a clear conscience. But for some time his family thought it likely that David would never re-appear, and the eldest son, who had the charge of Jacob on his hands, often thought it a little hard that David might perhaps be dead, and yet for want of certitude on that point, his legacy could not fall to his legal heir. But in this state of things the opposite certitude—namely, that David was still alive and in England—seemed to be brought by the testimony of a neighbor, who, having been on a journey to Cattleton, was pretty sure he had seen David in a gig, with a stout man driving by his side. He could “swear it was David,” though he could “give no account why, for he had no marks on him ; but no more had a white dog, and that didn't hinder folks from knowing a white dog.” It was this incident which had led to the advertisement.

The legacy was paid, of course, after a few preliminary disclosures as to Mr. David's actual position. He begged to send his love to his mother, and to say that

he hoped to pay her a dutiful visit by-and-by; but at present his business and near prospect of marriage made it difficult for him to leave home. His brother replied with much frankness:

“My mother may do as she likes about having you to see her, but, for my part, I don’t want to catch sight of you on the premises again. When folks have taken a new name, they’d better keep to their new ’quine-tance.”

David pocketed the insult along with the eighty-two pounds three, and travelled home again in some triumph at the ease of a transaction which had enriched him to this extent. He had no intention of offending his brother by further claims on his fraternal recognition, and relapsed with full contentment into the character of Mr. Edward Freely, the orphan, scion of a great but reduced family, with an eccentric uncle in the West Indies. (I have already hinted that he had some acquaintance with imaginative literature; and being of a practical turn, he had, you perceive, applied even this form of knowledge to practical purposes.)

It was little more than a week after the return from his fruitful journey, that the day of his marriage with Penny having been fixed, it was agreed that Mrs. Palfrey should overcome her reluctance to move from home, and that she and her husband should bring their two daughters to inspect little Penny’s future abode, and decide on the new arrangements to be made for the reception of the bride. Mr. Freely meant her to have a house so pretty and comfortable that she need not envy even a wool-factor’s wife. Of course the upper room over the shop was to be the best sitting-room, but

also the parlor behind the shop was to be made a suitable bower for the lovely Penny, who would naturally wish to be near her husband, though Mr. Freely declared his resolution never to allow *his* wife to wait in the shop. The decisions about the parlor furniture were left till last, because the party was to take tea there; and, about five o'clock, they were all seated there with the best muffins and buttered buns before them, little Penny blushing and smiling, with her "crop" in the best order, and a blue frock showing her little white shoulders, while her opinion was being always asked and never given. She secretly wished to have a particular sort of chimney ornaments, but she could not have brought herself to mention it. Seated by the side of her yellow and rather withered lover, who, though he had not reached his thirtieth year, had already crow's-feet about his eyes, she was quite tremulous at the greatness of her lot, being married to a man who had travelled so much—and before her sister Letty! The handsome Letitia looked rather proud and contemptuous, thought her future brother-in-law an odious person, and was vexed with her father and mother for letting Penny marry him. Dear little Penny! She certainly did look like a fresh white-heart cherry going to be bitten off the stem by that lipless mouth. Would no deliverer come to make a slip between that cherry and that mouth without a lip?

"Quite a family likeness between the admiral and you, Mr. Freely," observed Mrs. Palfrey, who was looking at the family portrait for the first time. "It's wonderful! and only a grand-uncle. Do you feature the rest of your family, as you know of?"

"I can't say," said Mr. Freely, with a sigh. "My family have mostly thought themselves too high to take any notice of me."

At this moment an extraordinary disturbance was heard in the shop, as of a heavy animal stamping about and making angry noises, and then of a glass vessel falling in shivers, while the voice of the apprentice was heard calling "Master" in great alarm.

Mr. Freely rose in anxious astonishment, and hastened into the shop, followed by the four Palfreys, who made a group at the parlor door, transfixed with wonder at seeing a large man in a smock-frock, with a pitchfork in his hand, rush up to Mr. Freely and hug him, crying out, "Zavy, Zavy, b'other Zavy!"

It was Jacob, and for some moments David lost all presence of mind. He felt arrested for having stolen his mother's guineas. He turned cold, and trembled in his brother's grasp.

"Why, how's this?" said Mr. Palfrey, advancing from the door. "Who is he?"

Jacob supplied the answer by saying over and over again,

"I'se Zacob, b'other Zacob. Come 'o zee Zavy"—till hunger prompted him to relax his grasp, and to seize a large raised pie, which he lifted to his mouth.

By this time David's power of device had begun to return, but it was a very hard task for his prudence to master his rage and hatred towards poor Jacob.

"I don't know who he is; he must be drunk," he said, in a low tone to Mr. Palfrey. "But he's dangerous with that pitchfork. He'll never let it go." Then checking himself on the point of betraying too great an

intimacy with Jacob's habits, he added: "*You* watch him, while I run for the constable." And he hurried out of the shop.

"Why, where do you come from, my man?" said Mr. Palfrey, speaking to Jacob in a conciliatory tone. Jacob was eating his pie by large mouthfuls, and looking round at the other good things in the shop, while he embraced his pitchfork with his left arm, and laid his left hand on some Bath buns. He was in the rare position of a person who recovers a long-absent friend and finds him richer than ever in the characteristics that won his heart.

"I'se Zacob—b'other Zacob—'t home. I love Zavy—b'other Zavy," he said, as soon as Mr. Palfrey had drawn his attention. "Zavy come back from z' Indies—got mother's zinnies. Where's Zavy?" he added, looking round, and then turning to the others with a questioning air, puzzled by David's disappearance.

"It's very odd," observed Mr. Palfrey to his wife and daughters. "He seems to say Freely's his brother come back from th' Indies."

"What a pleasant relation for us!" said Letitia, sarcastically. "I think he's a good deal like Mr. Freely. He's got just the same sort of nose, and his eyes are the same color."

Poor Penny was ready to cry.

But now Mr. Freely re-entered the shop without the constable. During his walk of a few yards he had had time and calmness enough to widen his view of consequences, and he saw that to get Jacob taken to the workhouse or to the lock-up house as an offensive stranger, might have awkward effects if his family took the

trouble of inquiring after him. He must resign himself to more patient measures.

"On second thoughts," he said, beckoning to Mr. Palfrey, and whispering to him while Jacob's back was turned, "he's a poor half-witted fellow. Perhaps his friends will come after him. I don't mind giving him something to eat, and letting him lie down for the night. He's got it into his head that he knows me—they do get these fancies, idiots do. He'll perhaps go away again in an hour or two, and make no more ado. I'm a kind-hearted man *myself*—I shouldn't like to have the poor fellow ill-used."

"Why, he'll eat a sovereign's worth in no time," said Mr. Palfrey, thinking Mr. Freely a little too magnificent in his generosity.

"Eh, Zavy, come back?" exclaimed Jacob, giving his dear brother another hug, which crushed Mr. Freely's features inconveniently against the handle of the pitchfork.

"Ay, ay," said Mr. Freely, smiling, with every capability of murder in his mind, except the courage to commit it. He wished the Bath buns might by chance have arsenic in them.

"Mother's zinnies?" said Jacob, pointing to a glass jar of yellow lozenges that stood in the window. "Zive 'em me."

David dared not do otherwise than reach down the glass jar and give Jacob a handful. He received them in his smock-frock, which he held out for more.

"They'll keep him quiet a bit, at any rate," thought David, and emptied the jar. Jacob grinned and mowed with delight.

"You're very good to this stranger, Mr. Freely," said Letitia; and then spitefully, as David joined the party at the parlor door, "I think you could hardly treat him better if he was really your brother."

"I've always thought it a duty to be good to idiots," said Mr. Freely, striving after the most moral view of the subject. "We might have been idiots ourselves—everybody might have been born idiots, instead of having their right senses."

"I don't know where there'd ha' been victual for us all, then," observed Mrs. Palfrey, regarding the matter in a housewifely light.

"But let us sit down again and finish our tea," said Mr. Freely. "Let us leave the poor creature to himself."

They walked into the parlor again; but Jacob, not apparently appreciating the kindness of leaving him to himself, immediately followed his brother, and seated himself, pitchfork grounded, at the table.

"Well," said Miss Letitia, rising, "I don't know whether *you* mean to stay, mother, but I shall go home."

"Oh, me too," said Penny, frightened to death at Jacob, who had begun to nod and grin at her.

"Well, I think we *had* better be going, Mr. Palfrey," said the mother, rising more slowly.

Mr. Freely, whose complexion had become decidedly yellower during the last half hour, did not resist this proposition. He hoped they should meet again "under happier circumstances."

"It's my belief the man's his brother," said Letitia, when they were all on their way home.

"Letty, it's very ill-natured of you," said Penny, beginning to cry.

"Nonsense!" said Mr. Palfrey. "Freely's got no brother; he's said so many and many a time. He's an orphan; he's got nothing but uncles—leastwise one. What's it matter what an idiot says? What call had Freely to tell lies?"

Lætitia tossed her head and was silent.

Mr. Freely, left alone with his affectionate brother Jacob, brooded over the possibility of luring him out of the town early the next morning, and getting him conveyed to Gilsbrook without further betrayals. But the thing was difficult. He saw clearly that if he took Jacob away himself, his absence, conjoined with the disappearance of the stranger, would either cause the conviction that he was really a relative, or would oblige him to the dangerous course of inventing a story to account for his disappearance and his own absence at the same time. David groaned. There come occasions when falsehood is felt to be inconvenient. It would, perhaps, have been a longer-headed device if he had never told any of those clever fibs about his uncles, grand and otherwise; for the Palfreys were simple people, and shared the popular prejudice against lying. Even if he could get Jacob away this time, what security was there that he would not come again, having once found the way? O guineas! O lozenges! what enviable people those were who had never robbed their mothers and had never told fibs! David spent a sleepless night, while Jacob was snoring close by. Was this the upshot of travelling to the Indies, and acquiring experience combined with anecdote?

He rose at break of day, as he had once before done when he was in fear of Jacob, and took all gentle means to rouse him from his deep sleep; he dared not be loud, because his apprentice was in the house, and would report everything. But Jacob was not to be roused. He fought out with his fist at the unknown cause of disturbance, turned over, and snored again. He must be left to wake as he would. David, with a cold perspiration on his brow, confessed to himself that Jacob could not be got away that day.

Mr. Palfrey came over to Grimworth before noon, with a natural curiosity to see how his future son-in-law got on with the stranger to whom he was so benevolently inclined. He found a crowd round the shop. All Grimworth by this time had heard how Freely had been fastened on by an idiot, who called him "Brother Zavy;" and the younger population seemed to find the singular stranger an unwearying source of fascination, while the householders dropped in one by one to inquire into the incident.

"Why don't you send him to the workhouse?" said Mr. Prettyman. "You'll have a row with him and the children presently, and he'll eat you up. The workhouse is the proper place for him; let his kin claim him if he's got any."

"Those may be *your* feelings, Mr. Prettyman," said David, his mind quite enfeebled by the torture of his position.

"What, *is* he your brother, then?" said Mr. Prettyman, looking at his neighbor Freely rather sharply.

"All men are our brothers, and idiots particular so," said Mr. Freely, who, like many other men of ex-

tensive knowledge, was not master of the English language.

"Come, come, if he's your brother, tell the truth, man," said Mr. Prettyman, with growing suspicion. "Don't be ashamed of your own flesh and blood."

Mr. Palfrey was present, and also had his eye on Freely. It is difficult for a man to believe in the advantage of a truth which will disclose him to have been a liar. In this critical moment David shrank from this immediate disgrace in the eyes of his future father-in-law.

"Mr. Prettyman," he said, "I take your observations as an insult. I've no reason to be otherwise than proud of my own flesh and blood. If this poor man was my brother more than all men are, I should say so."

A tall figure darkened the door, and David, lifting his eyes in that direction, saw his eldest brother, Jonathan, on the door-sill.

"I'll stay wi' Zavy," shouted Jacob, as he, too, caught sight of his eldest brother, and running behind the counter he clutched David hard.

"What, he *is* here?" said Jonathan Faux, coming forward. "My mother would have no nay, as he'd been away so long, but I must see after him. And it struck me he was very like come after you, because we'd been talking of you o' late, and where you lived."

David saw there was no escape; he smiled a ghastly smile.

"What, is this a relation of yours, sir?" said Mr. Palfrey to Jonathan.

"Ay, it's my innicent of a brother, sure enough," said honest Jonathan. "A fine trouble and cost he is

to us in th' eating and other things, but we must bear what's laid on us."

"And your name's Freely, is it?" said Mr. Prettyman.

"Nay, nay, my name's Faux; I know nothing o' Freelys," said Jonathan, curtly. "Come," he added, turning to David, "I must take some news to mother about Jacob. Shall I take him with me, or will you undertake to send him back?"

"Take him, if you can make him loose his hold of me," said David, feebly.

"Is this gentleman here in the confectionery line your brother, then, sir?" said Mr. Prettyman, feeling that it was an occasion on which formal language must be used.

"I don't want to own him," said Jonathan, unable to resist a movement of indignation that had never been allowed to satisfy itself. "He run away from home with good reasons in his pocket years ago; he didn't want to be owned again, I reckon."

Mr. Palfrey left the shop; he felt his own pride too severely wounded by the sense that he had let himself be fooled to feel curiosity for further details. The most pressing business was to go home and tell his daughter that Freely was a poor sneak, probably a rascal, and that her engagement was broken off.

Mr. Prettyman stayed, with some internal self-gratulation that *he* had never given in to Freely, and that Mr. Chaloner would see now what sort of fellow it was that he had put over the heads of older parishioners. He considered it due from him (Mr. Prettyman) that, for the interests of the parish, he should know all that was

to be known about this "interloper." Grimworth would have people coming from Botany Bay to settle in it, if things went on in this way.

It soon appeared that Jacob could not be made to quit his dear brother David except by force. He understood, with a clearness equal to that of the most intelligent mind, that Jonathan would take him back to skimmed milk, apple-dumpling, broad-beans, and pork. And he had found a paradise in his brother's shop. It was a difficult matter to use force with Jacob, for he wore heavy, nailed boots; and if his pitchfork had been mastered, he would have resorted without hesitation to kicks. Nothing short of using guile to bind him hand and foot would have made all parties safe.

"Let him stay," said David, with desperate resignation, frightened above all things at the idea of further disturbances in his shop which would make his exposure all the more conspicuous. "*You* go away again, and to-morrow I can, perhaps, get him to go to Gilsbrook with me. He'll follow me fast enough, I dare say," he added, with a half groan.

"Very well," said Jonathan, gruffly. "I don't see why *you* shouldn't have some trouble and expense with him as well as the rest of us. But mind you bring him back safe and soon, else mother 'll never rest."

On this arrangement being concluded, Mr. Prettyman begged Mr. Jonathan Faux to go and take a snack with him—an invitation which was quite acceptable; and as honest Jonathan had nothing to be ashamed of, it is probable that he was very frank in his communications to the civil draper, who, pursuing the benefit of the parish, hastened to make all the information he could

gather about Freely common parochial property. You may imagine that the meeting of the club at the Woolpack that evening was unusually lively. Every member was anxious to prove that he had never liked Freely, as he called himself. Faux was his name, was it? Fox would have been more suitable. The majority expressed a desire to see him hooted out of the town.

Mr. Freely did not venture over his door-sill that day, for he knew Jacob would keep at his side, and there was every probability that they would have a train of juvenile followers. He sent to engage the Woolpack gig for an early hour the next morning; but this order was not kept religiously a secret by the landlord. Mr. Freely was informed that he could not have the gig till seven; and the Grimworth people were early risers. Perhaps they were more alert than usual on this particular morning; for when Jacob, with a bag of sweets in his hand, was induced to mount the gig with his brother David, the inhabitants of the marketplace were looking out of their doors and windows, and at the turning of the street there was even a muster of apprentices and school-boys, who shouted as they passed in what Jacob took to be a very merry and friendly way, nodding and grinning in return. "Huzzay, David Faux, how's your uncle?" was their morning's greeting. Like other pointed things, it was not altogether impromptu.

Even this public derision was not so crushing to David as the horrible thought, that though he might succeed now in getting Jacob home again, there would never be any security against his coming back, like a wasp to the honey-pot. As long as David lived at

Grimworth, Jacob's return would be hanging over him. But could he go on living at Grimworth—an object of ridicule, discarded by the Palfreys, after having revelled in the consciousness that he was an envied and prosperous confectioner? David liked to be envied; he minded less about being loved.

His doubts on this point were soon settled. The mind of Grimworth became obstinately set against him and his viands, and the new school being finished, the eating-room was closed. If there had been no other reason, sympathy with the Palfreys, that respectable family who had lived in the parish time out of mind, would have determined all well-to-do people to decline Freely's goods. Besides, he had absconded with his mother's guineas: who knew what else he had done, in Jamaica or elsewhere, before he came to Grimworth, worming himself into families under false pretences? Females shuddered. Dire suspicions gathered round him: his green eyes, his bow-legs, had a criminal aspect. The rector disliked the sight of a man who had imposed upon him; and all boys who could not afford to purchase hooted "David Faux" as they passed his shop. Certainly no man now would pay anything for the "good-will" of Mr. Freely's business, and he would be obliged to quit it without a peculium so desirable towards defraying the expense of moving.

In a few months the shop in the market-place was again to let, and Mr. David Faux, *alias* Edward Freely, had gone—nobody at Grimworth knew whither. In this way the demoralization of Grimworth women was checked. Young Mrs. Steene renewed her efforts to make light mince-pies, and having at last made a

batch so excellent that Mr. Steene looked at her with complacency as he ate them, and said they were the best he had ever eaten in his life, she thought less of bulbuls and renegades ever after. The secrets of the finer cookery were revived in the breasts of matronly housewives, and daughters were again anxious to be initiated in them.

You will further, I hope, be glad to hear that some purchases of drapery made by pretty Penny, in preparation for her marriage with Mr. Freely, came in quite as well for her wedding with young Towers as if they had been made expressly for the latter occasion. For Penny's complexion had not altered, and blue always became it best.

Here ends the story of Mr. David Faux, confectioner, and his brother Jacob. And we see in it, I think, an admirable instance of the unexpected forms in which the great Nemesis hides herself.

THE LIFTED VEIL

THE LIFTED VEIL.

"Give me no light, great Heaven, but such as turns
To energy of human fellowship ;
No powers beyond the growing heritage
That makes completer manhood."—G. E.

CHAPTER I.

THE time of my end approaches. I have lately been subject to attacks of *angina pectoris*, and in the ordinary course of things, my physician tells me, I may fairly hope that my life will not be protracted many months. Unless, then, I am cursed with an exceptional physical constitution, as I am cursed with an exceptional mental character, I shall not much longer groan under the wearisome burden of this earthly existence. If it were to be otherwise—if I were to live on to the age most men desire and provide for—I should for once have known whether the miseries of delusive expectation can outweigh the miseries of true prevision. For I foresee when I shall die, and everything that will happen in my last moments.

Just a month from this day, on the 20th of September, 1850, I shall be sitting in this chair, in this study, at ten o'clock at night, longing to die, weary of incessant insight and foresight, without delusions and without hope. Just as I am watching a tongue of blue flame

rising in the fire, and my lamp is burning low, the horrible contraction will begin at my chest. I shall only have time to reach the bell, and pull it violently, before the sense of suffocation will come. No one answers my bell. I know why. My two servants are lovers, and will have quarrelled. My house-keeper will have rushed out of the house in a fury, two hours before, hoping that Perry will believe she has gone to drown herself. Perry is alarmed at last, and is gone out after her. The little scullery-maid is asleep on a bench; she never answers the bell; it does not wake her. The sense of suffocation increases; my lamp goes out with a horrible stench; I make a great effort, and snatch at the bell again. I long for life, and there is no help. I thirsted for the unknown; the thirst is gone. O God, let me stay with the known, and be weary of it! I am content. Agony of pain and suffocation—and all the while the earth, the fields, the pebbly brook at the bottom of the rookery, the fresh scent after the rain, the light of the morning through my chamber window, the warmth of the hearth after the frosty air—will darkness close over them forever?

Darkness—darkness—no pain—nothing but darkness; but I am passing on and on through the darkness; my thought stays in the darkness, but always with a sense of moving onward. . . .

Before that time comes I wish to use my last hours of ease and strength in telling the strange story of my experience. I have never fully unbosomed myself to any human being; I have never been encouraged to trust much in the sympathy of my fellow-men. But we have all a chance of meeting with some pity, some ten-

derness, some charity, when we are dead; it is the living only who cannot be forgiven—the living only from whom men's indulgence and reverence are held off, like the rain by the hard east wind. While the heart beats, bruise it—it is your only opportunity; while the eye can still turn towards you with moist, timid entreaty, freeze it with an icy, unanswering gaze; while the ear, that delicate messenger to the inmost sanctuary of the soul, can still take in the tones of kindness, put it off with hard civility, or sneering compliment, or envious affectation of indifference; while the creative brain can still throb with the sense of injustice, with the yearning for brotherly recognition—make haste—oppress it with your ill-considered judgments, your trivial comparisons, your careless misrepresentations. The heart will by-and-by be still—*ubi sæva indignatio ulterius cor lacerare nequit*;* the eye will cease to entreat; the ear will be deaf; the brain will have ceased from all wants as well as from all work. Then your charitable speeches may find vent; then you may remember and pity the toil and the struggle and the failure; then you may give due honor to the work achieved; then you may find extenuation for errors, and consent to bury them.

That is a “trivial school-boy text;” why do I dwell on it? It has little reference to me, for I shall leave no works behind me for men to honor. I have no near relatives who will make up, by weeping over my grave, for the wounds they inflicted on me when I was among them. It is only the story of my life that will perhaps win a little more sympathy from strangers when I am

* Inscription on Swift's tombstone.

dead, than I ever believed it would obtain from my friends while I was living.

My childhood perhaps seems happier to me than it really was, by contrast with all the after-years. For then the curtain of the future was as impenetrable to me as to other children. I had all their delight in the present hour, their sweet indefinite hopes for the morrow, and I had a tender mother. Even now, after the dreary lapse of long years, a slight trace of sensation accompanies the remembrance of her caress as she held me on her knee, her arms round my little body, her cheek pressed on mine. I had a complaint of the eyes that made me blind for a little while, and she kept me on her knee from morning till night. That unequalled love soon vanished out of my life, and even to my childish consciousness it was as if that life had become more chill. I rode my little white pony with the groom by my side as before, but there were no loving eyes looking at me as I mounted, no glad arms opened to me when I came back. Perhaps I missed my mother's love more than most children of seven or eight would have done, to whom the other pleasures of life remained as before, for I was certainly a very sensitive child. I remember still the mingled trepidation and delicious excitement with which I was affected by the tramping of the horses on the pavement in the echoing stables, by the loud resonance of the grooms' voices, by the booming bark of the dogs as my father's carriage thundered under the archway of the court-yard, by the din of the gong as it gave notice of luncheon and dinner. The measured tramp of soldiery which I sometimes heard—for my father's house lay near a county town where there were

large barracks—made me sob and tremble; and yet when they were gone past I longed for them to come back again.

I fancy my father thought me an odd child, and had little fondness for me, though he was very careful in fulfilling what he regarded as a parent's duties. But he was already past the middle of life, and I was not his only son. My mother had been his second wife, and he was five-and-forty when he married her. He was a firm, unbending, intensely orderly man, in root and stem a banker, but with a flourishing graft of the active landholder, aspiring to county influence: one of those people who are always like themselves from day to day, who are uninfluenced by the weather, and neither know melancholy nor high spirits. I held him in great awe, and appeared more timid and sensitive in his presence than at other times—a circumstance which, perhaps, helped to confirm him in the intention to educate me on a different plan from the prescriptive one with which he had complied in the case of my elder brother, already a tall youth at Eton. My brother was to be his representative and successor; he must go to Eton and Oxford, for the sake of making connections, of course. My father was not a man to underrate the bearing of Latin satirists or Greek dramatists on the attainment of an aristocratic position. But intrinsically he had slight esteem for "those dead but sceptred spirits," having qualified himself for forming an independent opinion by reading Potter's "Æschylus" and dipping into Francis's "Horace." To this negative view he added a positive one, derived from a recent connection with mining speculations—namely, that a scientific education was the

really useful training for a younger son. Moreover, it was clear that a shy, sensitive boy like me was not fit to encounter the rough experience of a public school. Mr. Letherall had said so very decidedly. Mr. Letherall was a large man in spectacles, who one day took my small head between his large hands, and pressed it here and there in an exploratory, suspicious manner, then placed each of his great thumbs on my temples, and pushed me a little way from him, and stared at me with glittering spectacles. The contemplation appeared to displease him, for he frowned sternly, and said to my father, drawing his thumbs across my eyebrows,

“The deficiency is there, sir—there; and here,” he added—touching the upper sides of my head—“here is the excess. That must be brought out, sir, and this must be laid to sleep.”

I was in a state of tremor, partly at the vague idea that I was the object of reprobation, partly in the agitation of my first hatred—hatred of this big spectacled man, who pulled my head about as if he wanted to buy and cheapen it.

I am not aware how much Mr. Letherall had to do with the system afterwards adopted towards me, but it was presently clear that private tutors, natural history, science, and the modern languages were the appliances by which the defects of my organization were to be remedied. I was very stupid about machines, so I was to be greatly occupied with them; I had no memory for classification, so it was particularly necessary that I should study systematic zoology and botany; I was hungry for human deeds and human emotions, so I was to be plentifully crammed with the mechanical powers,

the elementary bodies, and the phenomena of electricity and magnetism. A better-constituted boy would certainly have profited under my intelligent tutors, with their scientific apparatus, and would doubtless have found the phenomena of electricity and magnetism as fascinating as I was every Thursday assured they were. As it was, I could have paired off, for ignorance of whatever was taught me, with the worst Latin scholar that was ever turned out of a classical academy. I read Plutarch and Shakespeare and "Don Quixote" by the sly, and supplied myself in that way with wandering thoughts, while my tutor was assuring me that "an improved man, as distinguished from an ignorant one, was a man who knew the reason why water ran down hill." I had no desire to be this improved man. I was glad of the running water; I could watch it and listen to it gurgling among the pebbles and bathing the bright green water-plants by the hour together. I did not want to know *why* it ran; I had perfect confidence that there were good reasons for what was so very beautiful.

There is no need to dwell on this part of my life. I have said enough to indicate that my nature was of the sensitive, unpractical order, and that it grew up in an uncongenial medium, which could never foster it into happy, healthy development. When I was sixteen I was sent to Geneva to complete my course of education; and the change was a very happy one to me, for the first sight of the Alps, with the setting sun on them, as we descended the Jura, seemed to me like an entrance into heaven; and the three years of my life there were spent in a perpetual sense of exaltation, as if from a draught of delicious wine, at the presence of Nature in

all her awful loveliness. You will think, perhaps, that I must have been a poet, from this early sensibility to Nature. But my lot was not so happy as that. A poet pours forth his song, and *believes* in the listening ear and answering soul to which his song will be floated sooner or later. But the poet's sensibility without his voice—the poet's sensibility that finds no vent but in silent tears on the sunny bank, when the noonday light sparkles on the water, or in an inward shudder at the sound of harsh human tones, the sight of a cold human eye—this dumb passion brings with it a fatal solitude of soul in the society of one's fellow-men. My least solitary moments were those in which I pushed off in my boat at evening towards the centre of the lake. It seemed to me that the sky, and the glowing mountain-tops, and the wide blue water surrounded me with a cherishing love such as no human face had shed on me since my mother's love had vanished out of my life. I used to do as Jean Jacques did—lie down in my boat and let it glide where it would, while I looked up at the departing glow leaving one mountain-top after the other, as if the prophet's chariot of fire were passing over them on its way to the home of light. Then, when the white summits were all sad and corpse-like, I had to push homeward, for I was under careful surveillance, and was allowed no late wanderings. This disposition of mine was not favorable to the formation of intimate friendships among the numerous youths of my own age who are always to be found studying at Geneva. Yet I made *one* such friendship; and, singularly enough, it was with a youth whose intellectual tendencies were the very reverse of my own. I shall call him Charles

Meunier, his real surname—an English one, for he was of English extraction—having since become celebrated. He was an orphan, who lived on a miserable pittance while he pursued the medical studies for which he had a special genius. Strange, that with my vague mind, visionary and unobservant, hating inquiry, and given up to contemplation, I should have been drawn towards a youth whose strongest passion was science! But the bond was not an intellectual one; it came from a source that can happily blend the stupid with the brilliant, the dreamy with the practical—it came from community of feeling. Charles was poor and ugly, derided by Genevese *gamins*, and not acceptable in drawing-rooms. I saw that he was isolated, as I was, though from a different cause, and stimulated by a sympathetic resentment, I made timid advances towards him. It is enough to say that there sprang up as much comradeship between us as our different habits would allow; and in Charles's rare holidays we went up the Salève together, or took the boat to Vevay, while I listened dreamily to the monologues in which he unfolded his bold conceptions of future experiment and discovery. I mingled them confusedly in my thought with glimpses of blue water and delicate floating cloud, with the notes of birds and the distant glitter of the glacier. He knew quite well that my mind was half absent, yet he liked to talk to me in this way; for don't we talk of our hopes and our projects even to dogs and birds when they love us? I have mentioned this one friendship because of its connection with a strange and terrible scene which I shall have to narrate in my subsequent life.

This happier life at Geneva was put an end to by a

terrible illness, which is partly a blank to me, partly a time of dimly remembered suffering, with the presence of my father by my bed from time to time. Then came the languid monotony of convalescence, the days gradually breaking into variety and distinctness as my strength enabled me to take longer and longer drives. On one of these more vividly remembered days my father said to me, as he sat beside my sofa:

“When you are quite well enough to travel, Latimer, I shall take you home with me. The journey will amuse you and do you good, for I shall go through the Tyrol and Austria, and you will see many new places. Our neighbors the Filmores are come; Alfred will join us at Basle, and we shall all go together to Vienna, and back by Prague—”

My father was called away before he had finished his sentence, and he left my mind resting on the word *Prague*, with a strange sense that a new and wondrous scene was breaking upon me: a city under the broad sunshine, that seemed to me as if it were the summer sunshine of a long-past century arrested in its course, unrefreshed for ages by the dews of night or the rushing rain-cloud, scorching the dusty, weary, time-eaten grandeur of a people doomed to live on in the stale repetition of memories, like deposed and superannuated kings in their regal gold-inwoven tatters. The city looked so thirsty that the broad river seemed to me a sheet of metal; and the blackened statues, as I passed under their blank gaze, along the unending bridge, with their ancient garments and their saintly crowns, seemed to me the real inhabitants and owners of this place, while the busy, trivial men and women, hurrying to and

fro, were a swarm of ephemeral visitants infesting it for a day. It is such grim, stony beings as these, I thought, who are the fathers of ancient faded children in those tanned time-fretted dwellings that crowd the steep before me; who pay their court in the worn and crumbling pomp of the palace which stretches its monotonous length on the height; who worship wearily in the stifling air of the churches, urged by no fear or hope, but compelled by their doom to be ever old and undying, to live on in the rigidity of habit, as they live on in perpetual mid-day, without the repose of night or the new birth of morning.

A stunning clang of metal suddenly thrilled through me, and I became conscious of the objects in my room again: one of the fire-irons had fallen as Pierre opened the door to bring me my draught. My heart was palpitating violently, and I begged Pierre to leave my draught beside me; I would take it presently.

As soon as I was alone again I began to ask myself whether I had been sleeping. Was this a dream, this wonderfully distinct vision—minute in its distinctness down to a patch of colored light on the pavement, transmitted through a colored lamp in the shape of a star—of a strange city, quite unfamiliar to my imagination? I had seen no picture of Prague; it lay in my mind as a mere name, with vaguely remembered historical associations—ill-defined memories of imperial grandeur and religious wars.

Nothing of this sort had ever occurred in my dreaming experience before, for I had often been humiliated because my dreams were only saved from being utterly disjointed and commonplace by the frequent terrors of

nightmare. But I could not believe that I had been asleep, for I remembered distinctly the gradual breaking in of the vision upon me, like the new images in a dissolving view, or the growing distinctness of the landscape as the sun lifts up the veil of the morning mist. And while I was conscious of this incipient vision, I was also conscious that Pierre came to tell my father Mr. Filmore was waiting for him, and that my father hurried out of the room. No, it was not a dream; was it—the thought was full of tremulous exultation—was it the poet's nature in me, hitherto only a troubled, yearning sensibility, now manifesting itself suddenly as spontaneous creation? Surely it was in this way that Homer saw the plain of Troy, that Dante saw the abodes of the departed, that Milton saw the earthward flight of the Tempter. Was it that my illness had wrought some happy change in my organization, given a firmer tension to my nerves, carried off some dull obstruction? I had often read of such effects—in works of fiction, at least. Nay, in genuine biographies I had read of the subtilizing or exalting influence of some diseases on the mental powers. Did not Novalis feel his inspiration intensified under the progress of consumption?

When my mind had dwelt for some time on this blissful idea, it seemed to me that I might perhaps test it by an exertion of my will. The vision had begun when my father was speaking of our going to Prague. I did not for a moment believe it was really a representation of that city. I believed, I hoped, it was a picture that my newly liberated genius had painted in fiery haste, with the colors snatched from lazy memory. Suppose I were to fix my mind on some other place—Ven-

ice, for example, which was far more familiar to my imagination than Prague—perhaps the same sort of result would follow. I concentrated my thoughts on Venice; I stimulated my imagination with poetic memories, and strove to feel myself present in Venice, as I had felt myself present in Prague. But in vain. I was only coloring the Canaletto engravings that hung in my old bedroom at home; the picture was a shifting one, my mind wandering uncertainly in search of more vivid images; I could see no accident of form or shadow without conscious labor after the necessary conditions. It was all prosaic effort, not rapt passivity, such as I had experienced half an hour before. I was discouraged; but I remembered that inspiration was fitful.

For several days I was in a state of excited expectation, watching for a recurrence of my new gift. I sent my thoughts ranging over my world of knowledge, in the hope that they would find some object which would send a re-awakening vibration through my slumbering genius. But no; my world remained as dim as ever, and that flash of strange light refused to come again, though I watched for it with palpitating eagerness.

My father accompanied me every day in a drive and a gradually lengthening walk as my powers of walking increased; and one evening he had agreed to come and fetch me at twelve the next day, that we might go together to select a musical snuff-box and other purchases, rigorously demanded of a rich Englishman visiting Geneva. He was one of the most punctual of men and bankers, and I was always nervously anxious to be quite

ready for him at the appointed time. But, to my surprise, at a quarter past twelve he had not appeared. I felt all the impatience of a convalescent who has nothing particular to do, and who has just taken a tonic in the prospect of immediate exercise that would carry off the stimulus.

Unable to sit still and reserve my strength, I walked up and down the room, looking out on the current of the Rhone just where it leaves the dark blue lake, but thinking all the while of the possible causes that could detain my father.

Suddenly I was conscious that my father was in the room, but not alone : there were two persons with him. Strange ! I had heard no footstep, I had not seen the door open ; but I saw my father, and at his right hand our neighbor Mrs. Filmore, whom I remembered very well, though I had not seen her for five years. She was a commonplace, middle-aged woman, in silk and cashmere ; but the lady on the left of my father was not more than twenty — a tall, slim, willowy figure, with luxuriant blond hair arranged in cunning braids and folds that looked almost too massive for the slight figure and the small-featured, thin-lipped face they crowned. But the face had not a girlish expression : the features were sharp, the pale gray eyes at once acute, restless, and sarcastic. They were fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity, and I felt a painful sensation, as if a sharp wind were cutting me. The pale green dress and the green leaves that seemed to form a border about her blond hair made me think of a Water Nixie ; for my mind was full of German lyrics, and this pale, fatal-eyed woman, with the green weeds, looked like a

birth from some cold, sedgy stream, the daughter of an aged river.

"Well, Latimer, you thought me long," my father said. . . .

But while the last word was in my ears the whole group vanished, and there was nothing between me and the Chinese painted folding-screen that stood before the door. I was cold and trembling; I could only totter forward and throw myself on the sofa. This strange new power had manifested itself again. . . . But *was* it a power? Might it not rather be a disease—a sort of intermittent delirium, concentrating my energy of brain into moments of unhealthy activity, and leaving my saner hours all the more barren? I felt a dizzy sense of unreality in what my eye rested on; I grasped the bell convulsively, like one trying to free himself from nightmare, and rang it twice. Pierre came with a look of alarm in his face.

"Monsieur ne se trouve pas bien?" he said, anxiously.

"I'm tired of waiting, Pierre," I said, as distinctly and emphatically as I could—like a man determined to be sober in spite of wine. "I'm afraid something has happened to my father—he is usually so punctual. Run to the Hôtel des Bergues, and see if he is there."

Pierre left the room at once, with a soothing "Bien, monsieur," and I felt the better for this scene of simple waking prose. Seeking to calm myself still further, I went into my bedroom, adjoining the salon, and opened a case of eau-de-Cologne, took out a bottle, went through the process of taking out the cork very neatly, and then rubbed the reviving spirit over my hands and forehead and under my nostrils, drawing a new delight from the

scent because I had procured it by slow details of labor, and by no strange, sudden madness. Already I had begun to taste something of the horror that belongs to the lot of a human being whose nature is not adjusted to simple human conditions.

Still enjoying the scent, I returned to the salon ; but it was not unoccupied, as it had been before I left it. In front of the Chinese folding-screen there was my father, with Mrs. Filmore on his right hand, and on his left—the slim, blond-haired girl, with the keen face and the keen eyes fixed on me in half-smiling curiosity.

“Well, Latimer, you thought me long,” my father said. . . .

I heard no more, felt no more, till I became conscious that I was lying with my head low on the sofa, Pierre and my father by my side. As soon as I was thoroughly revived my father left the room, and presently returned, saying,

“I’ve been to tell the ladies how you are, Latimer. They were waiting in the next room. We shall put off our shopping expedition to-day.”

Presently he said, “That young lady is Bertha Grant, Mrs. Filmore’s orphan niece. Filmore has adopted her, and she lives with them, so you will have her for a neighbor when we go home—perhaps for a near relation ; for there is a tenderness between her and Alfred, I suspect, and I should be gratified by the match, since Filmore means to provide for her in every way as if she were his daughter. It hadn’t occurred to me that you knew nothing about her living with the Filmores.”

He made no further allusion to the fact of my having fainted at the moment of seeing her, and I would not

for the world have told him the reason. I shrank from the idea of disclosing to any one what might be regarded as a pitiable peculiarity, most of all from betraying it to my father, who would have suspected my sanity ever after.

I do not mean to dwell with particularity on the details of my experience. I have described these two cases at length, because they had definite, clearly traceable results in my after-lot.

Shortly after this last occurrence—I think the very next day—I began to be aware of a phase in my abnormal sensibility to which, from the languid and slight nature of my intercourse with others since my illness, I had not been alive before. This was the obtrusion on my mind of the mental process going forward in first one person and then another, with whom I happened to be in contact. The vagrant, frivolous ideas and emotions of some uninteresting acquaintance—Mrs. Filmore, for example—would force themselves on my consciousness like an importunate, ill-played musical instrument or the loud activity of an imprisoned insect. But this unpleasant sensibility was fitful, and left me moments of rest when the souls of my companions were once more shut out from me, and I felt a relief such as silence brings to wearied nerves. I might have believed this importunate insight to be merely a diseased activity of the imagination, but that my prevision of incalculable words and actions proved it to have a fixed relation to the mental process in other minds. But this superadded consciousness, wearying and annoying enough when it urged on me the trivial experience of indifferent people, became an intense pain and grief when it seemed to be

opening to me the souls of those who were in a close relation to me—when the rational talk, the graceful attentions, the bon-mots, and the kindly deeds, which used to make the web of their characters, were seen as if thrust asunder by a microscopic vision that showed all the intermediate frivolities, all the suppressed egoism, all the struggling chaos of puerilities, meanness, vague capricious memories, and indolent, makeshift thoughts, from which human words and deeds emerge like leaflets covering a fermenting heap.

At Basle we were joined by my brother Alfred, now a handsome, self-confident man of six-and-twenty—a thorough contrast to my fragile, nervous, ineffectual self. I believe I was held to have a sort of half-womanish, half-ghostly beauty; for the portrait-painters, who are thick as weeds at Geneva, had often asked me to sit to them, and I had been the model of a dying minstrel in a fancy picture. But I thoroughly disliked my own physique, and nothing but the belief that it was a condition of poetic genius would have reconciled me to it. That brief hope was quite fled, and I saw in my face now nothing but the stamp of a morbid organization, framed for passive suffering—too feeble for the sublime resistance of poetic production. Alfred, from whom I had been almost constantly separated, and who, in his present stage of character and appearance, came before me as a perfect stranger, was bent on being extremely friendly and brother-like to me. He had the superficial kindness of a good-humored, self-satisfied nature, that fears no rivalry and has encountered no contrarieties. I am not sure that my disposition was good enough for me to have been quite free from envy

towards him, even if our desires had not clashed, and if I had been in the healthy human condition that admits of generous confidence and charitable construction. There must always have been an antipathy between our natures. As it was, he became in a few weeks an object of intense hatred to me; and when he entered the room, still more when he spoke, it was as if a sensation of grating metal had set my teeth on edge. My diseased consciousness was more intensely and continually occupied with his thoughts and emotions than with those of any other person who came in my way. I was perpetually exasperated with the petty promptings of his conceit and his love of patronage, with his self-complacent belief in Bertha Grant's passion for him, with his half-pitying contempt for me—seen not in the ordinary indications of intonation and phrase and slight action, which an acute and suspicious mind is on the watch for, but in all their naked, skinless complication.

For we were rivals, and our desires clashed, though he was not aware of it. I have said nothing yet of the effect Bertha Grant produced in me on a nearer acquaintance. That effect was chiefly determined by the fact that she made the only exception, among all the human beings about me, to my unhappy gift of insight. About Bertha I was always in a state of uncertainty: I could watch the expression of her face, and speculate on its meaning; I could ask for her opinion with the real interest of ignorance; I could listen for her words and watch for her smile with hope and fear: she had for me the fascination of an unravelled destiny. I say it was this fact that chiefly determined the strong effect

she produced on me; for, in the abstract, no womanly character could seem to have less sympathy with that of a shrinking, romantic, passionate youth than Bertha's. She was keen, sarcastic, unimaginative, prematurely cynical, remaining critical and unmoved in the most impressive scenes, inclined to dissect all my favorite poems, and, most of all, contemptuous towards the German lyrics, which were my pet literature at that time. To this moment I am unable to define my feeling towards her: it was not ordinary boyish admiration, for she was the very opposite, even to the color of her hair, of the ideal woman who still remained to me the type of loveliness; and she was without that enthusiasm for the great and good which, even at the moment of her strongest dominion over me, I should have declared to be the highest element of character. But there is no tyranny more complete than that which a self-centred negative nature exercises over a morbidly sensitive nature perpetually craving sympathy and support. The most independent people feel the effect of a man's silence in heightening their value for his opinion — feel an additional triumph in conquering the reverence of a critic habitually captious and satirical: no wonder, then, that an enthusiastic, self-distrusting youth should watch and wait before the closed secret of a sarcastic woman's face, as if it were the shrine of the doubtfully benignant deity who ruled his destiny. For a young enthusiast is unable to imagine the total negation in another mind of the emotions that are stirring his own: they may be feeble, latent, inactive, he thinks, but they are there; they may be called forth — sometimes, in moments of happy hallucinations, he believes they may be there in

all the greater strength because he sees no outward sign of them. And this effect, as I have intimated, was heightened to its utmost intensity in me, because Bertha was the only being who remained for me in the mysterious seclusion of soul that renders such youthful delusion possible. Doubtless there was another sort of fascination at work—that subtle physical attraction which delights in cheating our psychological predictions, and in compelling the men who paint sylphs to fall in love with some *bonne et brave femme*, heavy-heeled and freckled.

Bertha's behavior towards me was such as to encourage all my illusions, to heighten my boyish passion, and make me more and more dependent on her smiles. Looking back with my present wretched knowledge, I conclude that her vanity and love of power were intensely gratified by the belief that I had fainted on first seeing her purely from the strong impression her person had produced on me. The most prosaic woman likes to believe herself the object of a violent, a poetic passion; and without a grain of romance in her, Bertha had that spirit of intrigue which gave piquancy to the idea that the brother of the man she meant to marry was dying with love and jealousy for her sake. That she meant to marry my brother was what at that time I did not believe; for though he was assiduous in his attentions to her, and I knew well enough that both he and my father had made up their minds to this result, there was not yet an understood engagement—there had been no explicit declaration; and Bertha habitually, while she flirted with my brother, and accepted his homage in a way that implied to him a thorough recog-

nition of its intention, made me believe, by the subtlest looks and phrases, slight feminine nothings that could never be quoted against her, that he was really the object of her secret ridicule—that she thought him, as I did, a coxcomb, whom she would have pleasure in disappointing. Me she openly petted in my brother's presence, as if I were too young and sickly ever to be thought of as a lover; and that was the view he took of me. But I believe she must inwardly have delighted in the tremors into which she threw me by the coaxing way in which she patted my curls, while she laughed at my quotations. Such caresses were always given in the presence of our friends, for when we were alone together she affected a much greater distance towards me, and now and then took the opportunity, by words or slight actions, to stimulate my foolish, timid hope that she really preferred me. And why should she not follow her inclination? I was not in so advantageous a position as my brother, but I had fortune, I was not a year younger than she was, and she was an heiress, who would soon be of age to decide for herself.

The fluctuations of hope and fear, confined to this one channel, made each day in her presence a delicious torment. There was one deliberate act of hers which especially helped to intoxicate me. When we were at Vienna her twentieth birthday occurred, and as she was very fond of ornaments, we all took the opportunity of the splendid jewellers' shops in that Teutonic Paris to purchase her a birthday present of jewellery. Mine, naturally, was the least expensive; it was an opal ring—the opal was my favorite stone, because it seems to blush and turn pale as if it had a soul. I told Bertha

so when I gave it her, and said that it was an emblem of the poetic nature, changing with the changing light of heaven and of woman's eyes. In the evening she appeared elegantly dressed, and wearing conspicuously all the birthday presents except mine. I looked eagerly at her fingers, but saw no opal. I had no opportunity of noticing this to her during the evening; but the next day, when I found her seated near the window alone, after breakfast, I said, "You scorn to wear my poor opal. I should have remembered that you despised poetic natures, and should have given you coral or turquoise, or some other opaque, unresponsive stone." "Do I despise it?" she answered, taking hold of a delicate gold chain which she always wore round her neck and drawing out the end from her bosom with my ring hanging to it. "It hurts me a little, I can tell you," she said, with her usual dubious smile, "to wear it in that secret place; and since your poetical nature is so stupid as to prefer a more public position, I shall not endure the pain any longer."

She took off the ring from the chain and put it on her finger, smiling still, while the blood rushed to my cheeks, and I could not trust myself to say a word of entreaty that she would keep the ring where it was before.

I was completely fooled by this, and for two days shut myself up in my own room whenever Bertha was absent, that I might intoxicate myself afresh with the thought of this scene, and all it implied.

I should mention that during these two months—which seemed a long life to me from the novelty and intensity of the pleasures and pains I underwent—my

diseased participation in other people's consciousness continued to torment me. Now it was my father, and now my brother, now Mrs. Filmore or her husband, and now our German courier, whose stream of thought rushed upon me like a ringing in the ears not to be got rid of, though it allowed my own impulses and ideas to continue their uninterrupted course. It was like a preternaturally heightened sense of hearing, making audible to one a roar of sound where others find perfect stillness. The weariness and disgust of this involuntary intrusion into other souls were counteracted only by my ignorance of Bertha and my growing passion for her—a passion enormously stimulated, if not produced, by that ignorance. She was my oasis of mystery in the dreary desert of knowledge. I had never allowed my diseased condition to betray itself or to drive me into any unusual speech or action, except once, when, in a moment of peculiar bitterness against my brother, I had forestalled some words which I knew he was going to utter—a clever observation, which he had prepared beforehand. He had occasionally a slightly affected hesitation in his speech, and when he paused an instant after the second word, my impatience and jealousy impelled me to continue the speech for him, as if it were something we had both learned by rote. He colored and looked astonished, as well as annoyed; and the words had no sooner escaped my lips than I felt a shock of alarm lest such an anticipation of words, very far from being words of course easy to divine, should have betrayed me as an exceptional being, a sort of quiet energumen, that every one, Bertha above all, would shudder at and avoid. But I magnified, as usual, the im-

pression any word or deed of mine could produce on others; for no one gave any sign of having noticed my interruption as more than a rudeness, to be forgiven me on the score of my feeble nervous condition.

While this superadded consciousness of the actual was almost constant with me, I had never had a recurrence of that distinct prevision which I have described in relation to my first interview with Bertha; and I was waiting with eager curiosity to know whether or not my vision of Prague would prove to have been an instance of the same kind. A few days after the incident of the opal ring, we were paying one of our frequent visits to the Lichtenberg Palace. I could never look at many pictures in succession; for pictures, when they are at all powerful, affect me so strongly that one or two exhausts all my capability of contemplation. This

morning I had been looking at Giorgione's picture of the cruel-eyed woman, said to be a likeness of Lucrezia Borgia. I had stood long alone before it, fascinated by the terrible reality of that cunning, relentless face, till I felt a strange poisoned sensation, as if I had long been inhaling a fatal odor, and was just beginning to be conscious of its effects. Perhaps even then I should not have moved away, if the rest of the party had not returned to this room, and announced that they were going to the Belvedere Gallery to settle a bet which had arisen between my brother and Mr. Filmore about a portrait. I followed them dreamily, and was hardly alive to what occurred till they had all gone up to the gallery, leaving me below; for I refused to come within sight of another picture that day. I made my way to the Grand Terrace, for it was agreed that we should

saunter in the gardens when the dispute had been decided. I had been sitting here a short space, vaguely conscious of trim gardens, with a city and green hills in the distance, when, wishing to avoid the proximity of the sentinel, I rose and walked down the broad stone steps, intending to seat myself farther on in the gardens. Just as I reached the gravel-walk, I felt an arm slipped within mine, and a light hand gently pressing my wrist. In the same instant a strange intoxicating numbness passed over me, like the continuance or climax of the sensation I was still feeling from the gaze of Lucrezia Borgia. The gardens, the summer sky, the consciousness of Bertha's arm being within mine, all vanished, and I seemed to be suddenly in darkness, out of which there gradually broke a dim fire-light, and I felt myself sitting in my father's leather chair in the library at home. I knew the fireplace—the dogs for the wood fire, the black marble chimney-piece with the white marble medallion of the dying Cleopatra in the centre. Intense and hopeless misery was pressing on my soul; the light became stronger, for Bertha was entering with a candle in her hand—Bertha, my wife—with cruel eyes, with green jewels and green leaves on her white ball-dress; every hateful thought within her present to me. . . . “Madman, idiot! why don't you kill yourself, then?” It was a moment of hell. I saw into her pitiless soul—saw its barren worldliness, its scorching hate—and felt it clothe me round like an air I was obliged to breathe. She came with her candle and stood over me with a bitter smile of contempt; I saw the great emerald brooch on her bosom, a studded serpent with diamond eyes. I shuddered—I despised this

woman with the barren soul and mean thoughts; but I felt helpless before her, as if she clutched my bleeding heart, and would clutch it till the last drop of life-blood ebbed away. She was my wife, and we hated each other. Gradually the hearth, the dim library, the candle-light disappeared—seemed to melt away into a background of light, the green serpent with the diamond eyes remaining a dark image on the retina. Then I had a sense of my eyelids quivering, and the living daylight broke in upon me; I saw gardens and heard voices; I was seated on the steps of the Belvedere Terrace, and my friends were round me.

The tumult of mind into which I was thrown by this hideous vision made me ill for several days, and prolonged our stay at Vienna. I shuddered with horror as the scene recurred to me; and it recurred constantly, with all its minutiae, as if they had been burned into my memory; and yet, such is the madness of the human heart under the influence of its immediate desires, I felt a wild hell-braving joy that Bertha was to be mine; for the fulfilment of my former prevision concerning her first appearance before me left me little hope that this last hideous glimpse of the future was the mere diseased play of my own mind, and had no relation to external realities. One thing alone I looked towards as a possible means of casting doubt on my terrible conviction, the discovery that my vision of Prague had been false—and Prague was the next city on our route.

Meanwhile, I was no sooner in Bertha's society again than I was as completely under her sway as before. What if I saw into the heart of Bertha, the matured woman—Bertha, my wife? Bertha, the girl, was a fas-

cinating secret to me still; I trembled under her touch; I felt the witchery of her presence; I yearned to be assured of her love. The fear of poison is feeble against the sense of thirst. Nay, I was just as jealous of my brother as before—just as much irritated by his small patronizing ways; for my pride, my diseased sensibility, were there as they had always been, and winced as inevitably under every offence as my eye winced from an intruding mote. The future, even when brought within the compass of feeling by a vision that made me shudder, had still no more than the force of an idea, compared with the force of present emotion—of my love for Bertha, of my dislike and jealousy towards my brother.

It is an old story, that men sell themselves to the tempter, and sign a bond with their blood, because it is only to take effect at a distant day, then rush on to snatch the cup their souls thirst after with no less savage an impulse because there is a dark shadow beside them for evermore. There is no short-cut, no patent tram-road, to wisdom. After all the centuries of invention, the soul's path lies through the thorny wilderness which must be still trodden in solitude, with bleeding feet, with sobs for help, as it was trodden by them of old time.

My mind speculated eagerly on the means by which I should become my brother's successful rival, for I was still too timid, in my ignorance of Bertha's actual feeling, to venture on any step that would urge from her an avowal of it. I thought I should gain confidence even for this, if my vision of Prague proved to have been veracious; and yet the horror of that certitude! Behind the slim girl Bertha, whose words and looks I watched for, whose touch was bliss, there stood continually that

Bertha with the fuller form, the harder eyes, the more rigid mouth—with the barren, selfish soul laid bare; no longer a fascinating secret, but a measured fact, urging itself perpetually on my unwilling sight. Are you unable to give me your sympathy, you who read this? Are you unable to imagine this double consciousness at work within me, flowing on like two parallel streams which never mingle their waters and blend into a common hue? Yet you must have known something of the presentiments that spring from an insight at war with passion; and my visions were only like presentiments intensified to horror. You have known the powerlessness of ideas before the might of impulse; and my visions, when once they had passed into memory, were mere ideas—pale shadows that beckoned in vain, while my hand was grasped by the living and the loved.

In after-days I thought with bitter regret that if I had foreseen something more or something different—if instead of that hideous vision which poisoned the passion it could not destroy, or if, even along with it, I could have had a foreshadowing of that moment when I looked on my brother's face for the last time, some softening influence would have been shed over my feeling towards him—pride and hatred would surely have been subdued into pity, and the record of those hidden sins would have been shortened. But this is one of the vain thoughts with which we men flatter ourselves. We try to believe that the egoism within us would have been easily melted, and that it was only the narrowness of our knowledge which hemmed in our generosity, our awe, our human piety, from submerging our hard indifference to the sensations and emotions of our fellow. Our tenderness and

self-renunciation seem strong when our egoism has had its day, when, after our mean striving for a triumph that is to be another's loss, the triumph comes suddenly, and we shudder at it, because it is held out by the chill hand of death.

Our arrival in Prague happened at night, and I was glad of this, for it seemed like a deferring of a terribly decisive moment, to be in the city for hours without seeing it. As we were not to remain long in Prague, but to go on speedily to Dresden, it was proposed that we should drive out the next morning and take a general view of the place, as well as visit some of its specially interesting spots, before the heat became oppressive; for we were in August, and the season was hot and dry. But it happened that the ladies were rather late at their morning toilet, and, to my father's politely repressed but perceptible annoyance, we were not in the carriage till the morning was far advanced. I thought, with a sense of relief, as we entered the Jews' quarter, where we were to visit the old synagogue, that we should be kept in this flat, shut-up part of the city until we should all be too tired and too warm to go farther; and so we should return without seeing more than the streets through which we had already passed. That would give me another day's suspense—suspense, the only form in which a fearful spirit knows the solace of hope. But as I stood under the blackened, groined arches of that old synagogue, made dimly visible by the seven thin candles in the sacred lamp, while our Jewish cicerone reached down the Book of the Law, and read to us in its ancient tongue, I felt a shuddering impression that this strange building, with its shrunken lights, this surviving with-

ered remnant of mediæval Judaism, was of a piece with my vision. Those darkened, dusty Christian saints, with their loftier arches and their larger candles, needed the consolatory scorn with which they might point to a more shrivelled death in life than their own.

As I expected, when we left the Jews' quarter the elders of our party wished to return to the hotel. But now, instead of rejoicing in this, as I had done beforehand, I felt a sudden overpowering impulse to go on at once to the bridge, and put an end to the suspense I had been wishing to protract. I declared, with unusual decision, that I would get out of the carriage and walk on alone; they might return without me. My father, thinking this merely a sample of my usual "poetic nonsense," objected that I should only do myself harm by walking in the heat; but when I persisted, he said, angrily, that I might follow my own absurd devices, but that Schmidt (our courier) must go with me. I assented to this, and set off with Schmidt towards the bridge. I had no sooner passed from under the archway of the grand old gate leading on to the bridge than a trembling seized me, and I turned cold under the mid-day sun; yet I went on; I was in search of something—a small detail which I remembered with special intensity as part of my vision. There it was—the patch of colored light on the pavement transmitted through a lamp in the shape of a star.

CHAPTER II.

BEFORE the autumn was at an end, and while the brown leaves still stood thick on the beeches in our park, my brother and Bertha were engaged to each other, and it was understood that their marriage was to take place early in the next spring. In spite of the certainty I had felt from that moment on the bridge at Prague that Bertha would one day be my wife, my constitutional timidity and distrust had continued to benumb me, and the words in which I had sometimes premeditated a confession of my love had died away unuttered. The same conflict had gone on within me as before—the longing for an assurance of love from Bertha's lips, the dread lest a word of contempt and denial should fall upon me like a corrosive acid. What was the conviction of a distant necessity to me? I trembled under a present glance, I hungered after a present joy, I was clogged and chilled by a present fear. And so the days passed on: I witnessed Bertha's engagement and heard her marriage discussed as if I were under a conscious nightmare, knowing it was a dream that would vanish, but feeling stifled under the grasp of hard-clutching fingers.

When I was not in Bertha's presence — and I was with her very often, for she continued to treat me with a playful patronage that wakened no jealousy in my brother—I spent my time chiefly in wandering, in stroll-

ing, or taking long rides while the daylight lasted, and then shutting myself up with my unread books; for books had lost the power of chaining my attention. My self-consciousness was heightened to that pitch of intensity in which our own emotions take the form of a drama that urges itself imperatively on our contemplation, and we begin to weep, less under the sense of our suffering than at the thought of it. I felt a sort of pitying anguish over the pathos of my own lot—the lot of a being finely organized for pain, but with hardly any fibres that responded to pleasure—to whom the idea of future evil robbed the present of its joy, and for whom the idea of future good did not still the uneasiness of a present yearning or a present dread. I went dumbly through that stage of the poet's suffering in which he feels the delicious pang of utterance, and makes an image of his sorrows.

I was left entirely without remonstrance concerning this dreamy, wayward life. I knew my father's thought about me—"That lad will never be good for anything in life: he may waste his years in an insignificant way on the income that falls to him: I shall not trouble myself about a career for him."

One mild morning in the beginning of November it happened that I was standing outside the portico patting lazy old Cæsar, a Newfoundland almost blind with age, the only dog that ever took any notice of me—for the very dogs shunned me, and fawned on the happier people about me—when the groom brought up my brother's horse which was to carry him to the hunt, and my brother himself appeared at the door, florid, broad-chested, and self-complacent, feeling what

a good-natured fellow he was not to behave insolently to us all on the strength of his great advantages.

"Latimer, old boy," he said to me, in a tone of compassionate cordiality, "what a pity it is you don't have a run with the hounds now and then. The finest thing in the world for low spirits."

"Low spirits!" I thought, bitterly, as he rode away; "that's the sort of phrase with which coarse, narrow natures like yours think you completely define experience of which you can know no more than your horse knows. It is to such as you that the good of this world falls: ready dulness, healthy selfishness, good-tempered conceit—these are the keys to happiness."

The quick thought came that my selfishness was even stronger than his—it was only a suffering selfishness instead of an enjoying one. But then, again, my exasperating insight into Alfred's self-complacent soul, his freedom from all the doubts and fears, the unsatisfied yearnings, the exquisite tortures of sensitiveness, that had made the web of my life, seemed to absolve me from all bonds towards him. This man needed no pity, no love; those fine influences would have been as little felt by him as the delicate white mist is felt by the rock it caresses. There was no evil in store for *him*: if he was not to marry Bertha, it would be because he had found a lot pleasanter to himself.

Mr. Filmore's house lay not more than half a mile beyond our own gates, and whenever I knew my brother was gone in another direction, I went there for the chance of finding Bertha at home. Later on in the day I walked thither. By a rare accident she was alone,

and we walked out in the grounds together, for she seldom went on foot beyond the trimly swept gravel-walks. I remember what a beautiful sylph she looked to me as the low November sun shone on her blond hair, and she tripped along teasing me with her usual light banter, to which I listened half fondly, half moodily: it was all the sign Bertha's mysterious inner self ever made to me. To-day perhaps the moodiness predominated, for I had not yet shaken off the access of jealous hate which my brother had raised in me by his parting patronage. Suddenly I interrupted and startled her by saying, almost fiercely, "Bertha, how can you love Alfred?"

She looked at me with surprise for a moment, but soon her light smile came again, and she answered, sarcastically, "Why do you suppose I love him?"

"How can you ask that, Bertha?"

"What! your wisdom thinks I must love the man I'm going to marry? The most unpleasant thing in the world. I should quarrel with him; I should be jealous of him; our *ménage* would be conducted in a very ill-bred manner. A little quiet contempt contributes greatly to the elegance of life."

"Bertha, that is not your real feeling. Why do you delight in trying to deceive me by inventing such cynical speeches?"

"I need never take the trouble of invention in order to deceive you, my small Tasso" (that was the mocking name she usually gave me). "The easiest way to deceive a poet is to tell him the truth."

She was testing the validity of her epigram in a daring way, and for a moment the shadow of my vision—

the Bertha whose soul was no secret to me—passed between me and the radiant girl, the playful sylph whose feelings were a fascinating mystery. I suppose I must have shuddered, or betrayed in some other way my momentary chill of horror.

“Tasso,” she said, seizing my wrist and peeping round into my face, “are you really beginning to discern what a heartless girl I am? Why, you are not half the poet I thought you were; you are actually capable of believing the truth about me.”

The shadow passed from between us, and was no longer the object nearest to me. The girl whose light fingers grasped me, whose elfish, charming face looked into mine—who, I thought, was betraying an interest in my feelings that she would not have directly avowed—this warm-breathing presence again possessed my senses and imagination like a returning siren melody that had been overpowered for an instant by the roar of threatening waves. It was a moment as delicious to me as the waking up to a consciousness of youth after a dream of middle age. I forgot everything but my passion, and said, with swimming eyes,

“Bertha, shall you love me when we are first married? I wouldn’t mind if you really loved me only for a little while.”

Her look of astonishment as she loosed my hand and started away from me recalled me to a sense of my strange, my criminal indiscretion.

“Forgive me,” I said, hurriedly, as soon as I could speak again; “I didn’t know what I was saying.”

“Ah, Tasso’s mad fit has come on, I see,” she answered, quietly, for she had recovered herself sooner than

I had. "Let him go home and keep his head cool. I must go in, for the sun is setting."

I left her—full of indignation against myself. I had let slip words which, if she reflected on them, might rouse in her a suspicion of my abnormal mental condition—a suspicion which of all things I dreaded. And besides that, I was ashamed of the apparent baseness I had committed in uttering them to my brother's betrothed wife. I wandered home slowly, entering our park through a private gate instead of by the lodges. As I approached the house, I saw a man dashing off at full speed from the stable-yard across the park. Had any accident happened at home? No; perhaps it was only one of my father's peremptory business errands that required this headlong haste. Nevertheless I quickened my pace without any distinct motive, and was soon at the house. I will not dwell on the scene I found there. My brother was dead—had been pitched from his horse and killed on the spot by a concussion of the brain.

I went up to the room where he lay, and where my father was seated beside him with a look of rigid despair. I had shunned my father more than any one since our return home, for the radical antipathy between our natures made my insight into his inner self a constant affliction to me. But now, as I went up to him, and stood beside him in sad silence, I felt the presence of a new element that blended us as we had never been blended before. My father had been one of the most successful men in the money-getting world: he had had no sentimental sufferings, no illness. The heaviest trouble that had befallen him was the death of his first wife. But

he married my mother soon after; and I remember he seemed exactly the same, to my keen childish observation, the week after her death as before. But now, at last, a sorrow had come—the sorrow of old age, which suffers the more from the crushing of its pride and its hopes, in proportion as the pride and hope are narrow and prosaic. His son was to have been married soon—would probably have stood for the borough at the next election. That son's existence was the best motive that could be alleged for making new purchases of land every year to round off the estate. It is a dreary thing to live on doing the same things year after year without knowing why we do them. Perhaps the tragedy of disappointed youth and passion is less piteous than the tragedy of disappointed age and worldliness.

As I saw into the desolation of my father's heart, I felt a movement of deep pity towards him, which was the beginning of a new affection—an affection that grew and strengthened in spite of the strange bitterness with which he regarded me in the first month or two after my brother's death. If it had not been for the softening influence of my compassion for him—the first deep compassion I had ever felt—I should have been stung by the perception that my father transferred the inheritance of an eldest son to me with a mortified sense that fate had compelled him to the unwelcome course of caring for me as an important being. It was only in spite of himself that he began to think of me with anxious regard. There is hardly any neglected child, for whom death has made vacant a more favored place, that will not understand what I mean.

Gradually, however, my new deference to his wishes,

the effect of that patience which was born of my pity for him, won upon his affection, and he began to please himself with the endeavor to make me fill my brother's place as fully as my feebleness would admit. I saw that the prospect which by-and-by presented itself of my becoming Bertha's husband was welcome to him, and he even contemplated in my case what he had not intended in my brother's—that his son and daughter-in-law should make one household with him. My softened feeling towards my father made this the happiest time I had known since childhood; these last months in which I retained the delicious illusion of loving Bertha, of longing and doubting and hoping that she loved me. She behaved with a certain new consciousness and distance towards me after my brother's death; and I, too, was under a double constraint—that of delicacy towards my brother's memory and of anxiety as to the impression my abrupt words had left on her mind. But the additional screen this mutual reserve erected between us only brought me more completely under her power: no matter how empty the adytum, so that the veil be thick enough. So absolute is our soul's need of something hidden and uncertain for the maintenance of that doubt and hope and effort which are the breath of its life, that if the whole future were laid bare to us beyond to-day, the interest of all mankind would be bent on the hours that lie between; we should pant after the uncertainties of our one morning and our one afternoon; we should rush fiercely to the Exchange for our last possibility of speculation, of success, of disappointment; we should have a glut of political prophets foretelling a crisis or a no-crisis within the only twenty-four hours

left open to prophecy. Conceive the condition of the human mind if all propositions whatsoever were self-evident except one, which was to become self-evident at the close of a summer's day, but in the mean time might be the subject of question, of hypothesis, of debate. Art and philosophy, literature and science would fasten like bees on that one proposition that had the honey of probability in it, and be the more eager because their enjoyment would end with sunset. Our impulses, our spiritual activities no more adjust themselves to the idea of their future nullity than the beating of our heart or the irritability of our muscles.

Bertha, the slim, fair-haired girl, whose present thoughts and emotions were an enigma to me amid the fatiguing obviousness of the other minds around me, was as absorbing to me as a single unknown to-day—as a single hypothetic proposition to remain problematic till sunset; and all the cramped, hemmed-in belief and disbelief, trust and distrust, of my nature welled out in this one narrow channel.

And she made me believe that she loved me. Without ever quitting her tone of badinage and playful superiority, she intoxicated me with the sense that I was necessary to her, that she was never at ease unless I was near her, submitting to her playful tyranny. It costs a woman so little effort to besot us in this way! A half-repressed word, a moment's unexpected silence, even an easy fit of petulance on our account, will serve us as *hashish* for a long while. Out of the subtlest web of scarcely perceptible signs she set me weaving the fancy that she had always unconsciously loved me better than Alfred, but that, with the ignorant, fluttered

sensibility of a young girl, she had been imposed on by the charm that lay for her in the distinction of being admired and chosen by a man who made so brilliant a figure in the world as my brother. She satirized herself in a very graceful way for her vanity and ambition. What was it to me that I had the light of my wretched prevision on the fact that now it was I who possessed at least all but the personal part of my brother's advantages? Our sweet illusions are half of them conscious illusions, like effects of color that we know to be made up of tinsel, broken glass, and rags.

We were married eighteen months after Alfred's death, one cold, clear morning in April, when there came hail and sunshine both together; and Bertha, in her white silk and pale green leaves, and the pale sunshine of her hair and eyes, looked like the spirit of the morning. My father was happier than he had thought of being again: my marriage, he felt sure, would complete the desirable modification of my character, and make me practical and worldly enough to take my place in society among sane men. For he delighted in Bertha's tact and acuteness, and felt sure she would be mistress of me, and make me what she chose: I was only twenty-one, and madly in love with her. Poor father! He kept that hope a little while after our first year of marriage, and it was not quite extinct when paralysis came and saved him from utter disappointment.

I shall hurry through the rest of my story, not dwelling so much as I have hitherto done on my inward experience. When people are well known to each other, they talk rather of what befalls them externally, leaving their feelings and sentiments to be inferred.

We lived in a round of visits for some time after our return home, giving splendid dinner-parties, and making a sensation in our neighborhood by the new lustre of our equipage, for my father had reserved this display of his increased wealth for the period of his son's marriage; and we gave our acquaintances liberal opportunity for remarking that it was a pity I made so poor a figure as an heir and a bridegroom. The nervous fatigue of this existence, the insincerities and platitudes which I had to live through twice over—through my inner and outward sense—would have been maddening to me, if I had not had that sort of intoxicated callousness which came from the delights of a first passion. A bride and bridegroom, surrounded by all the appliances of wealth, hurried through the day by the whirl of society, filling their solitary moments with hastily snatched caresses, are prepared for their future life together, as the novice is prepared for the cloister by experiencing its utmost contrast.

Through all these crowded, excited months Bertha's inward self remained shrouded from me, and I still read her thoughts only through the language of her lips and demeanor. I had still the delicious human interest of wondering whether what I did and said pleased her, of longing to hear a word of affection, of giving a delicious exaggeration of meaning to her smile. But I was conscious of a growing difference in her manner towards me: sometimes strong enough to be called haughty coldness, cutting and chilling me as the hail had done that came across the sunshine on our marriage morning; sometimes only perceptible in the dextrous avoidance of a *tête-à-tête* walk or dinner, to which

I had been looking forward. I had been deeply pained by this, had even felt a sort of crushing of the heart, from the sense that my brief day of happiness was near its setting; but still I remained dependent on Bertha, eager for the last rays of a bliss that would soon be gone forever, hoping and watching for some after-glow more beautiful from the impending night.

I remember—how should I not remember?—the time when that dependence and hope utterly left me, when the sadness I had felt in Bertha's growing estrangement became a joy that I looked back upon with longing, as a man might look back on the last pains in a paralyzed limb. It was just after the close of my father's last illness, which necessarily withdrew us from society, and threw us more upon each other. It was the evening of my father's death. On that evening the veil that had shrouded Bertha's soul from me, and made me find in her alone among my fellow-beings the blessed possibility of mystery and doubt and expectation, was first withdrawn. Perhaps it was the first day since the beginning of my passion for her in which that passion was completely neutralized by the presence of an absorbing feeling of another kind. I had been watching by my father's death-bed: I had been witnessing the last fitful, yearning glances his soul had cast back on the spent inheritance of life, the last faint consciousness of love he had gathered from the pressure of my hand. What are all our personal loves when we have been sharing in that supreme agony? In the first moments when we come away from the presence of death every other relation to the living is merged, to our feeling, in the great relation of a common nature and a common destiny.

It was in that state of mind that I joined Bertha in her private sitting-room. She was seated in a leaning posture on a settee, with her back towards the door, the great rich coils of her blond hair surmounting her small neck, visible above the back of the settee. I remember as I closed the door behind me a cold tremulousness seizing me, and a vague sense of being hated and lonely—vague and strong, like a presentiment. I know how I looked at that moment, for I saw myself in Bertha's thought as she lifted her cutting gray eyes and looked at me—a miserable ghost-seer, surrounded by phantoms in the noonday, trembling under a breeze when the leaves were still, without appetite for the common objects of human desire, but pining after the moonbeams. We were front to front with each other, and judged each other. The terrible moment of complete illumination had come to me, and I saw that the darkness had hidden no landscape from me, but only a blank prosaic wall. From that evening forth, through the sickening years that followed, I saw all round the narrow room of this woman's soul; saw petty artifice and mere negation where I had delighted to believe in coy sensibilities, and in wit at war with latent feeling; saw the light floating vanities of the girl defining themselves into the systematic coquetry, the scheming selfishness, of the woman; saw repulsion and antipathy hardening into cruel hatred, giving pain only for the sake of wreaking itself.

For Bertha, too, after her kind, felt the bitterness of disillusion. She had believed that my wild poet's passion for her would make me her slave, and that, being her slave, I should execute her will in all things. With the essential shallowness of a negative, unimaginative

nature, she was unable to conceive the fact that sensibilities were anything else than weaknesses. She had thought my weaknesses would put me in her power, and she found them unmanageable forces. Our positions were reversed. Before marriage she had completely mastered my imagination, for she was a secret to me; and I created the unknown thought before which I trembled, as if it were hers. But now that her soul was laid open to me, now that I was compelled to share the privacy of her motives, to follow all the petty devices that preceded her words and acts, she found herself powerless with me, except to produce in me the chill shudder of repulsion—powerless, because I could be acted on by no lever within her reach. I was dead to worldly ambitions, to social vanities, to all the incentives within the compass of her narrow imagination, and I lived under influences utterly invisible to her.

She was really pitiable to have such a husband, and so all the world thought. A graceful, brilliant woman like Bertha, who smiled on morning callers, made a figure in ball-rooms, and was capable of that light repartee which, from such a woman, is accepted as wit, was secure of carrying off all sympathy from a husband who was sickly, abstracted, and, as some suspected, crack-brained. Even the servants in our house gave her the balance of their regard and pity. For there were no audible quarrels between us; our alienation, our repulsion from each other lay within the silence of our own hearts; and if the mistress went out a great deal, and seemed to dislike the master's society, was it not natural, poor thing? The master was odd. I was kind and just to my dependents, but I excited in them a shrinking, half-contemptuous

pity; for this class of men and women are but slightly determined in their estimate of others by general considerations of character. They judge of persons as they judge of coins, and value those who pass current at a high rate.

After a time I interfered so little with Bertha's habits that it might seem wonderful how her hatred towards me could grow so intense and active as it did. But she had begun to suspect, by some involuntary betrayals of mine, that there was an abnormal power of penetration in me—that fitfully, at least, I was strangely cognizant of her thoughts and intentions; and she began to be haunted by a terror of me, which alternated every now and then with defiance. She meditated continually how the incubus could be shaken off her life, how she could be freed from this hateful bond to a being whom she at once despised as an imbecile and dreaded as an inquisitor. For a long while she lived in the hope that my evident wretchedness would drive me to the commission of suicide; but suicide was not in my nature. I was too completely swayed by the sense that I was in the grasp of unknown forces to believe in my power of self-release. Towards my own destiny I had become entirely passive, for my one ardent desire had spent itself, and impulse no longer predominated over knowledge. For this reason I never thought of taking any steps towards a complete separation, which would have made our alienation evident to the world. Why should I rush for help to a new course, when I was only suffering from the consequences of a deed which had been the act of my intensest will? That would have been the logic of one who had desires to gratify, and I had no desires.

But Bertha and I lived more and more aloof from each other. The rich find it easy to live married and apart.

That course of our life which I have indicated in a few sentences filled the space of years. So much misery, so slow and hideous a growth of hatred and sin may be compressed into a sentence! And men judge of each other's lives through this summary medium. They epitomize the experience of their fellow-mortal, and pronounce judgment on him in neat syntax, and feel themselves wise and virtuous—conquerors over the temptations they define in well-selected predicates. Seven years of wretchedness glide glibly over the lips of the man who has never counted them out in moments of chill disappointment, of head and heart throbbings, of dread and vain wrestling, of remorse and despair. We learn words by rote, but not their meaning; *that* must be paid for with our life-blood, and printed in the subtle fibres of our nerves.

But I will hasten to finish my story. Brevity is justified at once to those who readily understand and to those who will never understand.

Some years after my father's death I was sitting by the dim firelight in my library one January evening—sitting in the leather chair that used to be my father's—when Bertha appeared at the door, with a candle in her hand, and advanced towards me. I knew the ball-dress she had on—the white ball-dress, with the green jewels, shone upon by the light of the wax-candle, which lit up the medallion of the dying Cleopatra on the mantel-piece. Why did she come to me before going out? I had not seen her in the library, which was my habitual place, for months. Why did she stand before me with

the candle in her hand, with her cruel, contemptuous eyes fixed on me, and the glittering serpent, like a familiar demon, on her breast? For a moment I thought this fulfilment of my vision at Vienna marked some dreadful crisis in my fate, but I saw nothing in Bertha's mind, as she stood before me, except scorn for the look of overwhelming misery with which I sat before her. . . . "Fool, idiot, why don't you kill yourself, then?"—that was her thought. But at length her thoughts reverted to her errand, and she spoke aloud. The apparently indifferent nature of the errand seemed to make a ridiculous anticlimax to my prevision and my agitation.

"I have had to hire a new maid. Fletcher is going to be married, and she wants me to ask you to let her husband have the public-house and farm at Molton. I wish him to have it. You must give the promise now, because Fletcher is going to-morrow morning—and quickly, because I'm in a hurry."

"Very well; you may promise her," I said, indifferently, and Bertha swept out of the library again.

I always shrank from the sight of a new person, and all the more when it was a person whose mental life was likely to weary my reluctant insight with worldly, ignorant trivialities. But I shrank especially from the sight of this new maid, because her advent had been announced to me at a moment to which I could not cease to attach some fatality. I had a vague dread that I should find her mixed up with the dreary drama of my life—that some new sickening vision would reveal her to me as an evil genius. When at last I did unavoidably meet her, the vague dread was changed into

definite disgust. She was a tall, wiry, dark-eyed woman this Mrs. Archer, with a face handsome enough to give her coarse hard nature the odious finish of bold, self-confident coquetry. That was enough to make me avoid her, quite apart from the contemptuous feeling with which she contemplated me. I seldom saw her; but I perceived that she rapidly became a favorite with her mistress, and after the lapse of eight or nine months, I began to be aware that there had arisen in Bertha's mind towards this woman a mingled feeling of fear and dependence, and that this feeling was associated with ill-defined images of candle-light scenes in her dressing-room, and the locking up of something in Bertha's cabinet. My interviews with my wife had become so brief and so rarely solitary that I had no opportunity of perceiving these images in her mind with more definiteness. The recollections of the past become contracted in the rapidity of thought till they sometimes bear hardly a more distinct resemblance to the external reality than the forms of an Oriental alphabet to the objects that suggested them.

Besides, for the last year or more, a modification had been going forward in my mental condition, and was growing more and more marked. My insight into the minds of those around me was becoming dimmer and more fitful, and the ideas that crowded my double consciousness became less and less dependent on any personal contact. All that was personal in me seemed to be suffering a gradual death, so that I was losing the organ through which the personal agitations and projects of others could affect me. But along with this relief from wearisome insight, there was a new develop-

ment of what I concluded—as I have since found rightly—to be a prevision of external scenes. It was as if the relation between me and my fellow-men was more and more deadened, and my relation to what we call the inanimate was quickened into new life. The more I lived apart from society, and in proportion as my wretchedness subsided from the violent throb of agonized passion into the dullness of habitual pain, the more frequent and vivid became such visions as that I had had of Prague—of strange cities, of sandy plains, of gigantic ruins, of midnight skies with strange bright constellations, of mountain passes, of grassy nooks flecked with the afternoon sunshine through the boughs. I was in the midst of all these scenes, and in all of them one presence seemed to weigh on me in all these mighty shapes—the presence of something unknown and pitiless. For continual suffering had annihilated religious faith within me; to the utterly miserable—the unloving and the unloved—there is no religion possible, no worship but a worship of devils, and beyond all these, and continually recurring, was the vision of my death—the pangs, the suffocation, the last struggle, when life would be grasped at in vain.

Things were in this state near the end of the seventh year. I had become entirely free from insight, from my abnormal cognizance of any other consciousness than my own, and instead of intruding involuntarily into the world of other minds, was living continually in my own solitary future. Bertha was aware that I was greatly changed. To my surprise she had of late seemed to seek opportunities of remaining in my society, and had cultivated that kind of distant yet familiar

talk which is customary between a husband and wife who live in polite and irrevocable alienation. I bore this with languid submission, and without feeling enough interest in her motives to be roused into keen observation; yet I could not help perceiving something triumphant and excited in her carriage and the expression of her face—something too subtle to express itself in words or tones, but giving one the idea that she lived in a state of expectation or hopeful suspense. My chief feeling was satisfaction that her inner self was once more shut out from me; and I almost revelled for the moment in the absent melancholy that made me answer her at cross-purposes, and betray utter ignorance of what she had been saying. I remember well the look and the smile with which she one day said, after a mistake of this kind on my part, “I used to think you were a clairvoyant, and that was the reason why you were so bitter against other clairvoyants, wanting to keep your monopoly; but I see now you have become rather duller than the rest of the world.”

I said nothing in reply. It occurred to me that her recent obtrusion of herself upon me might have been prompted by the wish to test my power of detecting some of her secrets; but I let the thought drop again at once; her motives and her deeds had no interest for me, and whatever pleasures she might be seeking, I had no wish to balk her. There was still pity in my soul for every living thing, and Bertha was living—was surrounded with possibilities of misery.

Just at this time there occurred an event which roused me somewhat from my inertia, and gave me an interest in the passing moment that I had thought impossible

for me. It was a visit from Charles Meunier, who had written me word that he was coming to England for relaxation from too strenuous labor, and would like to see me. Meunier had now a European reputation; but his letter to me expressed that keen remembrance of an early regard, an early debt of sympathy, which is inseparable from nobility of character; and I, too, felt as if his presence would be to me like a transient resurrection into a happier pre-existence.

He came, and as far as possible I renewed our old pleasure of making *tête-à-tête* excursions, though instead of mountains and glaciers and the wide blue lake, we had to content ourselves with mere slopes and ponds and artificial plantations. The years had changed us both, but with what different result! Meunier was now a brilliant figure in society, to whom elegant women pretended to listen, and whose acquaintance was boasted of by noblemen ambitious of brains. He repressed with the utmost delicacy all betrayal of the shock which I am sure he must have received from our meeting, or of a desire to penetrate into my condition and circumstances, and sought by the utmost exertion of his charming social powers to make our reunion agreeable. Bertha was much struck by the unexpected fascinations of a visitor whom she had expected to find presentable only on the score of his celebrity, and put forth all her coqueties and accomplishments. Apparently she succeeded in attracting his admiration, for his manner towards her was attentive and flattering. The effect of his presence on me was so benignant, especially in those renewals of our old *tête-à-tête* wanderings when he poured forth to me wonderful narratives of his professional experience, that

more than once, when his talk turned on the psychological relations of disease, the thought crossed my mind that, if his stay with me were long enough, I might possibly bring myself to tell this man the secrets of my lot. Might there not lie some remedy for *me*, too, in his science? Might there not at least lie some comprehension and sympathy ready for me in his large and susceptible mind? But the thought only flickered feebly now and then, and died out before it could become a wish. The horror I had of again breaking in on the privacy of another soul made me, by an irrational instinct, draw the shroud of concealment more closely around my own, as we automatically perform the gesture we feel to be wanting in another.

When Meunier's visit was approaching its conclusion, there happened an event which caused some excitement in our household, owing to the surprisingly strong effect it appeared to produce on Bertha—on Bertha, the self-possessed, who usually seemed inaccessible to feminine agitations, and did even her hate in a self-restrained, hygienic manner. This event was the sudden severe illness of her maid, Mrs. Archer. I have reserved to this moment the mention of a circumstance which had forced itself on my notice shortly before Meunier's arrival—namely, that there had been some quarrel between Bertha and this maid, apparently during a visit to a distant family, in which she had accompanied her mistress. I had overheard Archer speaking in a tone of bitter insolence, which I should have thought an adequate reason for immediate dismissal. No dismissal followed; on the contrary, Bertha seemed to be silently putting up with personal inconveniences from the exhibition of this

woman's temper. I was the more astonished to observe that her illness seemed a cause of strong solicitude to Bertha; that she was at the bedside night and day, and would allow no one else to officiate as head-nurse. It happened that our family doctor was out on a holiday—an accident which made Meunier's presence in the house doubly welcome, and he apparently entered into the case with an interest which seemed so much stronger than the ordinary professional feeling that one day, when he had fallen into a long fit of silence after visiting her, I said to him,

“Is this a very peculiar case of disease, Meunier?”

“No,” he answered, “it is an attack of peritonitis, which will be fatal, but which does not differ physically from many other cases that have come under my observation. But I'll tell you what I have on my mind. I want to make an experiment on this woman, if you will give me permission. It can do her no harm—will give her no pain—for I shall not make it until life is extinct to all purposes of sensation. I want to try the effect of transfusing blood into her arteries after the heart has ceased to beat for some minutes. I have tried the experiment again and again with animals that have died of this disease, with astounding results, and I want to try it on a human subject. I have the small tubes necessary in a case I have with me, and the rest of the apparatus could be prepared readily. I should use my own blood—take it from my own arm. This woman won't live through the night, I'm convinced, and I want you to promise me your assistance in making the experiment. I can't do without another hand, but it would perhaps not be well to call in a medical assistant from

among your provincial doctors. A disagreeable, foolish version of the thing might get abroad."

"Have you spoken to my wife on the subject?" I said, "because she appears to be peculiarly sensitive about this woman; she has been a favorite maid."

"To tell you the truth," said Meunier, "I don't want her to know about it. There are always insuperable difficulties with women in these matters, and the effect on the supposed dead body may be startling. You and I will sit up together, and be in readiness. When certain symptoms appear I shall take you in, and at the right moment we must manage to get every one else out of the room."

I need not give our further conversation on the subject. He entered very fully into the details, and overcame my repulsion from them by exciting in me a mingled awe and curiosity concerning the possible results of his experiment.

We prepared everything, and he instructed me in my part as assistant. He had not told Bertha of his absolute conviction that Archer would not survive through the night, and endeavored to persuade her to leave the patient and take a night's rest. But she was obstinate, suspecting the fact that death was at hand, and supposing that he wished merely to save her nerves. She refused to leave the sick-room. Meunier and I sat up together in the library, he making frequent visits to the sick-room, and returning with the information that the case was taking precisely the course he expected. Once he said to me, "Can you imagine any cause of ill-feeling this woman has against her mistress, who is so devoted to her?"

"I think there was some misunderstanding between them before her illness. Why do you ask?"

"Because I have observed for the last five or six hours—since, I fancy, she has lost all hope of recovery—there seems a strange prompting in her to say something which pain and failing strength forbid her to utter; and there is a look of hideous meaning in her eyes, which she turns continually towards her mistress. In this disease the mind often remains singularly clear to the last."

"I am not surprised at an indication of malevolent feeling in her," I said. "She is a woman who has always inspired me with distrust and dislike, but she managed to insinuate herself into her mistress's favor."

Meunier remained silent after this, looking at the fire with an air of absorption, till he went up-stairs again. He remained away longer than usual, and on returning, said to me, quietly, "Come now."

I followed him to the chamber where death was hovering. The dark hangings of the large bed made a background that gave a strong relief to Bertha's pale face as I entered. She started forward as she saw me enter, and then looked at Meunier with an expression of angry inquiry; but he lifted up his hand as if to impose silence, while he fixed his glance on the dying woman and felt her pulse. The face was pinched and ghastly, a cold perspiration was on the forehead, and the eyelids were lowered so as almost to conceal the large dark eyes. After a minute or two, Meunier walked round to the other side of the bed where Bertha stood, and with his usual air of gentle politeness towards her begged her to leave the patient under our care—everything should

be done for her—she was no longer in a state to be conscious of an affectionate presence. Bertha was hesitating, apparently almost willing to believe his assurance and to comply. She looked round at the ghastly dying face, as if to read the confirmation of that assurance, when for a moment the lowered eyelids were raised again, and it seemed as if the eyes were looking towards Bertha, but blankly. A shudder passed through Bertha's frame, and she returned to her station near the pillow, tacitly implying that she would not leave the room.

The eyelids were lifted no more. Once I looked at Bertha as she watched the face of the dying one. She wore a rich peignoir, and her blond hair was half covered by a lace cap; in her attire she was, as always, an elegant woman, fit to figure in a picture of modern aristocratic life; but I asked myself how that face of hers could ever have seemed to me the face of a woman born of woman, with memories of childhood, capable of pain, needing to be fondled? The features at that moment looked so preternaturally sharp, the eyes were so hard and eager—she looked like a cruel immortal, finding her spiritual feast in the agonies of a dying race. For across those hard features there came something like a flash when the last hour had been breathed out, and we all felt that the dark veil had completely fallen.

What secret was there between Bertha and this woman? I turned my eyes from her with a horrible dread lest my insight should return, and I should be obliged to see what had been breeding about two unloving women's hearts. I felt that Bertha had been watching for the moment of death as the sealing of her secret; I thanked Heaven it could remain sealed for me.

Meunier said, quietly, "Gone." He then gave his arm to Bertha, and she submitted to be led out of the room.

I suppose it was at her order that two female attendants came into the room, and dismissed the younger one who had been present before. When they entered, Meunier had already opened the artery in the long thin neck that lay rigid on the pillow, and I dismissed them, ordering them to remain at a distance till we rang; the doctor, I said, had an operation to perform—he was not sure about the death. For the next twenty minutes I forgot everything but Meunier and the experiment in which he was so absorbed, that I think his senses would have been closed against all sounds or sights that had no relation to it. It was my task at first to keep up the artificial respiration in the body after the transfusion had been effected, but presently Meunier relieved me, and I could see the wondrous slow return of life; the breast began to heave, the inspirations became stronger, the eyelids quivered, and the soul seemed to have returned beneath them. The artificial respiration was withdrawn; still the breathing continued, and there was a movement of the lips.

Just then I heard the handle of the door moving; I suppose Bertha had heard from the women that they had been dismissed; probably a vague fear had arisen in her mind, for she entered with a look of alarm. She came to the foot of the bed and gave a stifled cry.

The dead woman's eyes were wide open, and met hers in full recognition—the recognition of hate. With a sudden strong effort the hand that Bertha had thought forever still was pointed towards her, and the haggard face moved. The gasping, eager voice said:

"You mean to poison your husband—the poison is in the black cabinet—I got it for you—you laughed at me, and told lies about me behind my back, to make me disgusting—because you were jealous—are you sorry—now?"

The lips continued to murmur, but the sounds were no longer distinct. Soon there was no sound—only a slight movement: the flame had leaped out, and was being extinguished the faster. The wretched woman's heartstrings had been set to hatred and vengeance; the spirit of life had swept the chords for an instant, and was gone again forever. Good God! This is what it is to live again—to wake up with our unstilled thirst upon us, with our unuttered curses rising to our lips, with our muscles ready to act out their half-committed sins.

Bertha stood pale at the foot of the bed, quivering and helpless, despairing of devices, like a cunning animal whose hiding-places are surrounded by swift-advancing flame. Even Meunier looked paralyzed; life for that moment ceased to be a scientific problem to him. As for me, this scene seemed of one texture with the rest of my existence: horror was my familiar, and this new revelation was only like an old pain recurring with new circumstances.

* * * * *

Since then Bertha and I have lived apart—she in her own neighborhood, the mistress of half our wealth, I as a wanderer in foreign countries, until I came to this Devonshire nest to die. Bertha lives pitied and admired—for what had I against that charming woman, whom every one but myself could have been happy with?

There had been no witness of the scene in the dying-room except Meunier, and while Meunier lived his lips were sealed by a promise to me.

Once or twice, weary of wandering, I rested in a favorite spot, and my heart went out towards the men and women and children whose faces were becoming familiar to me; but I was driven away again in terror at the approach of my old insight—driven away to live continually with the one Unknown Presence revealed and yet hidden by the moving curtain of the earth and sky. Till at last disease took hold of me and forced me to rest here—forced me to live in dependence on my servants. And then the curse of insight, of my double consciousness, came again, and has never left me. I know all their narrow thoughts, their feeble regard, their half-wearied pity.

* * * * *

It is the 20th of September, 1850. I know these figures I have just written, as if they were a long-familiar inscription. I have seen them on this page in my desk unnumbered times, when the scene of my dying struggle has opened upon me. . . .

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